

**The story of a public space project:  
La Red de Alamedas de Bogotá**

by

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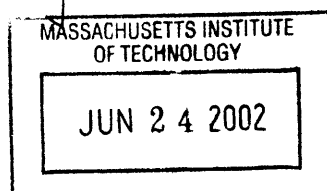
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Submitted to the Department of Architecture  
on May 23, 2002 in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in  
Architecture Studies

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## **ABSTRACT**

La Red de Alamedas de Bogotá is a new type of public space project consisting in a network of tree lined pedestrian streets with bicycle paths. Alamedas connect parks and natural systems as well as residential areas and urban facilities. In general, Alamedas have been proposed for the periphery of the city where there is a lack of public space. La red de Alamedas was developed during the administration of Enrique Peñalosa, Bogotá City Mayor from 1998 to 2000; improvement of the quantity and quality of public space was one of Penalosa's government plan priorities. Moreover, a new general plan for the city, Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial, POT was developed during those years. Thus, alamedas became public space projects in more comprehensive interventions in the city.

Alamedas proceed from a range of concerns in the construction of the city such as the development of public space projects to overcome the difficulties of general plans when dealing with particular problems and specific areas, and as a way to improve the quality of life in the city. Besides, alamedas can be considered a reinterpretation of promenades and paseos, an urban type which has been present in the city since colonial times. Alamedas have been proposed as a new public space which is superimposed to the existing urban structure in certain areas in order to reorganize the urban structure and at the same time as a new way of building the city that is, through the construction of public space in the first place. Most the alamedas are still urban design projects, only two of the alamedas included in this document have been built. Alamedas have different characters according to the areas and the urban conditions of the proposed corridors. Alameda El Porvenir, the most ambitious one has been studied in more depth. Alamedas work as an alternative path for pedestrian and bicycle circulation and are at the same time a recreational space; besides, alamedas have also started to become a representative space much in the way of the traditional plaza.

To Antonio Angel, my father



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Fig. 1 Red de Alamedas de Bogotá.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

La Red de Alamedas de Bogotá (fig.1) is a new type of public space project developed in the capital city of Colombia in the year 2000. La red de Alamedas was proposed during the administration of Enrique Peñalosa, Bogotá City Mayor from 1998 to 2001. Under Peñalosa's administration the city underwent a profound physical transformation. Improvement of the quality and quantity of public space was one of Peñalosa's government plan priorities<sup>1</sup>. La Red de Alamedas de Bogotá intended to be consistent with the City Mayor government program in improving the citizens quality of life and the construction of a more egalitarian city. Moreover, a new general city plan, Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial, POT, which is the city plan to the year 2010, was also developed during those years. Alamedas as well as other projects and programs proposed during the 1998-2001 administration have been included in the POT<sup>2</sup>. Thus alamedas, as it will be explained further on, became public space projects in more comprehensive interventions in the city.

In October 2000 my office was selected to design Alameda Jaboque, a 6.5 km long alameda from Simón Bolívar Park - a 300 ha metropolitan park - to Humedal del Jaboque - one of Bogotá

<sup>1</sup> Peñalosa's government plan "Plan de desarrollo económico y social y de obras públicas para Santa Fé de Bogotá D.C 1998-2001" was structured through seven priorities: improvement of marginal areas, social interaction, a city conceived in a human scale, mobility, urbanism and services, security, institutional efficiency, and priority projects. These seven priorities included specific strategies, programs and goals to generate a profound change and improvement of the citizens quality of life.

<sup>2</sup> Alamedas are considered in Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial POT, decree 619 of the year 2000, article 237 as linear pedestrian spaces together with paseos and pakways.

River wetlands. Being involved in the design of one of the alamedas encouraged me to inquire into the nature of these public space projects and into the role alamedas play as one of the elements of the urban structure.

La Red de Alamedas de Bogotá is a network of tree lined pedestrian streets with bicycle paths and street furniture. Along the proposed corridors alamedas connect parks, green spaces and natural systems as well as residential areas and urban facilities. The intention of La Red de Alamedas is to provide a good quality and continuous linear public space for pedestrian as well as bicycle circulation and places where people can meet and enjoy city life. Although alamedas have been developed all over the city most of the alamedas have been proposed for the periphery of the city considered as expansion areas in various stages of consolidation and where no public space has been provided.

Alamedas consist of a reduced repertoire of elements. They are usually 15m width on average and may become plazas when special urban conditions occur along the corridor such as major street junctions, urban facilities or natural elements. Alamedas can vary between 17 km to 1 km long according to the area of the city where they have been proposed.

Most of the alamedas that will be described in this document are still urban design projects that will be built as part of the public space infrastructure of a new city plan. At the moment only two of these alamedas have been built; Alameda Bosa is finished and Alameda El Porvenir is still under construction (figs.2,3)

Alamedas proceed from recurrent preoccupations in the construction of the city; a range of concerns that include the development of projects to overcome the difficulties of general plans when dealing with particular problems and specific areas, and the development of public space in the city. On one hand, and in relation to the development of public space projects, the latter have been proposed in the history of Bogotá city plans as an alternative to improve the physical conditions of particular areas in the city but also in the belief that they may trigger more complex urban processes. Thus, alamedas have been included in the POT as public space projects in more comprehensive operations in the city. On the other hand, the construction of the collective space

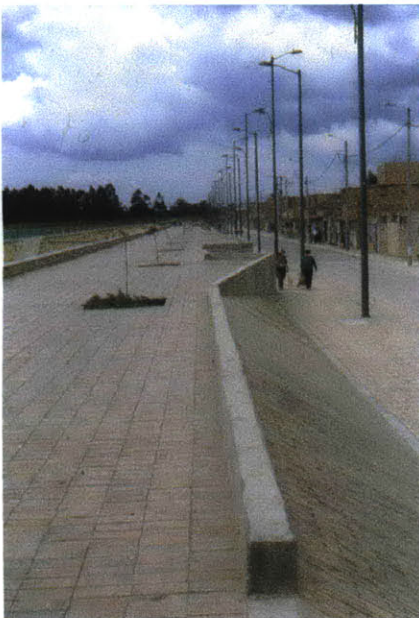


Fig. 2 Alameda Bosa



Fig. 3 Alameda El Porvenir



has always been a concern which has had different emphasis and intentions. Furthermore, the last city administrations have been concerned with the quantity and quality of public space provision to improve life conditions in the city and to consolidate an urban culture; additionally, regaining the role of public agents in the construction of the city and the development of public space as one aspect of public agents' interventions is one of the new plan's objectives.

Moreover, it could be argued at the same time, that alamedas propose and develop new ways of dealing with the construction of the city. In general, alamedas located in periphery areas have been proposed as a new public space structure superimposed to the existing one. Thus alamedas' projects are intended to help in the consolidation of these areas through the construction of public space. Furthermore, alamedas could also be considered a new kind of public space serving many purposes both functional and representative. Alamedas work as an alternative path for pedestrian and bicycle circulation while they can also be used as a recreational space; alamedas such as El Porvenir connect places that would be difficult to reach if the alameda did not exist. At the same time alamedas relate and enhance what is now called the ecological structure of the city. Besides, alamedas have started to become a representative public space much in the way of the traditional plaza.



Fig. 4 Cicloruta Boyacá Avenue



Fig. 5 Ciclovía

Regarding the way in which alamedas have begun to be used, Alameda El Porvenir will be referred to as an example. Although some sections of the alameda are not safe yet, it is possible to argue that a sense of appropriation from the people towards the alameda is in progress. Besides, pedestrian circulation as well as bicycle riding is common in periphery areas. Nonetheless, bicycle riding as an alternative transportation system is yet to be developed. Alamedas' bicycle paths will connect to ciclorutas' project (fig. 4), a new bicycle network that is being implemented along some of the main streets in the city. Furthermore, there is an already settled tradition of bicycle riding for pleasure in Bogotá; since the eighties bicycle riding is possible along one hundred and twenty street kilometers -called ciclovías- which are closed to automobile traffic throughout the city on Sundays and holidays (fig.5).

The purpose of this document is to trace the story of la red de Alamedas as a public space project and verify some of the assumptions concerning the role alamedas play in the urban structure of the areas where alamedas have been proposed, to inquire into the nature of these public space projects and to assess the way in which alamedas have started to be used and appropriated by the people:

- First, alamedas origins and antecedents will be traced in the urban development of Bogotá. Two aspects will be reviewed: one is the development of public space projects in relation to general plans. The other, is the development of the promenade as an urban type in Bogotá.
- Second, alamedas as public space projects will be explained in the context of the 1998-2001 city administration and Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial POT. Since most alamedas are still projects, a revision of alamedas in the context of the POT's general ideas might be useful to understand their potential as one of the new elements in the urban structure.
- Third, alamedas will be described in relation to the areas where they have been proposed to understand the nature of the different projects. Alamedas will also be classified in a matrix according to their features.
- Fourth, Alameda El Porvenir will be studied in more depth to see the role it plays in the urban structure of the south-west area and to assess the way in which it is being used.

Alamedas included in this document can be described as linear public spaces of a certain length that connect residential areas, urban facilities and natural elements. These alamedas have been developed through El Taller del Espacio Público (TEP), the office in charge of public space affairs within the City Planning Department (DAPD). Most of these alamedas are complete urban design projects and have been included in the POT as such.

A related kind of interventions called alamedas as well have been built and developed in the city and have also been included in the POT. These alamedas have been proposed along natural systems, urban facilities and along existing streets. Although they may connect to the ones described in this document, these alamedas



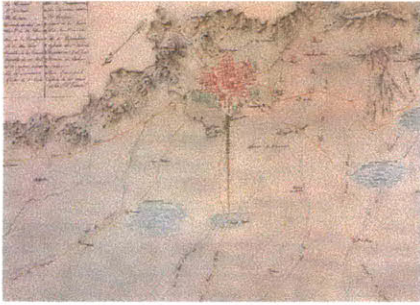


Fig. 6 Carlos Cabrer, Bogotá Plan 1797.



Fig. 7 Bolivar Plaza, 1



Fig. 8 Plaza San Victorino, Bogotá 1887.



Fig. 9 Calle Real, Bogotá



Fig. 10 Government building, 1933

have another character; their nature and the role they play in the urban structure its different and will not be discussed in this document. Furthermore, La Red de Alamedas is not a finished project. Other alamedas are being proposed and developed in the POT and through Taller del Espacio Publico (TEP) in the City Planning Department, DAPD.

## 2. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY OF BOGOTÁ:

Bogotá, the capital city of Colombia, is an almost 6.500.000 million inhabitant city located on a plateau formed by Los Andes range of mountains at 2.600 m from the sea level. Because Colombia is above the Ecuadorian line, the average temperature in Bogotá is around 14°C all year long with slight changes due to dry and rainy seasons.

Colombia which had a prominent indigenous culture, was a Spanish colony from the XVI to XVII century and was declared an independent country from Spain in 1810. Bogotá was founded by conqueror Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada in 1538 and was developed as a gridiron settlement according the law of the Indies (fig. 6), which were adapted and subsequently modified to include the particular geographical conditions of the place, the presence of the mountains -at the base of which the city was developed- and the rivers. An orthogonal street network around square blocks stemming from a main plaza framed by the main religious and civic buildings (fig. 7), together with small plazas and streets with no trees and one and two stories high houses were the main features of the colonial city (figs. 8, 9) The most relevant colonial architecture were the religious buildings: churches, monasteries and convents. Extensions of the basic grid were done in a similar way to the original settlement so it could be said that the city had the same character until the end of the XIX century.

The republican period which corresponds to the end of the XIX and the beginning of the XX century brought the first significant changes to the city. The consolidation of a free nation and the selling of Panama was considered a time of prosperity for the city which was expressed through architecture and urban design. The first monumental buildings -following a neoclassic European language-, to house governmental institutions were build (fig.10);

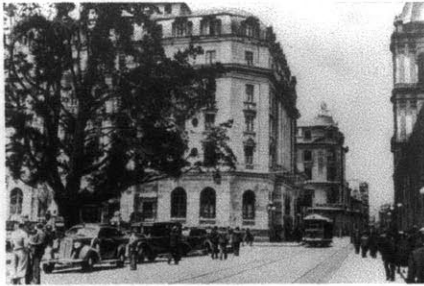


Fig. 11 Calle Real, Bogotá 1938.



Fig. 12 Teusaquillo neighborhood, Bogotá

Futhermore, the urban structure was enhanced with avenues and public parks (fig. 11); at the same time urban facilities – theaters, markets, schools and universities- as well as industrial buildings made their appearance in the urban scene. Besides, the city started to grow to the north and the first suburban area was developed. During the thirties and forties a transition from the republican city to a modern city was evidenced by the development of residential areas and the extension of the city to the west side promoted among other things by the construction of the first airport. Residential areas were developed following the garden city movement ideals and new elements in the urban structure such as diagonals and curved streets that created new perspectives in the city and new kind urban spaces such as the neighborhood park and the tree lined avenues which transformed the traditional urban space, were introduced (fig.12). Furthermore, in architecture an eclectic language was developed. During this time the neighborhood as a form of growth in the city was established. Modern architecture and modern urbanism was introduced in the city by liberal governments concerned with modernization and progress. When Le Corbusier made its first trip to Bogotá in 1947<sup>3</sup>, there was already a group of professionals and city administrators practicing architecture and urban design according to modern architecture principles. The year 1948 represents a sad moment for the city. As a consequence of the popular riots and disturbs that followed the Jorge Gaitan's murder, a political leader, the city center was partially destroyed and had to be further reconstructed and the city expansion to the north was definitely settled. Expansion to the west side started during the fifties as a consequence of governmental projects, the new airport and Le Corbusiers' plan. Today the city has a semicircular configuration framed by the mountains and the Bogotá River (figs. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17).

<sup>3</sup> Le Corbusier made five trips to Bogotá, 1947, 1949, came twice during 1950 and 1951. Pedro Bannen Lanata Bogotá, Colombia, cinco viajes y un plan para una ciudad latinoamericana.



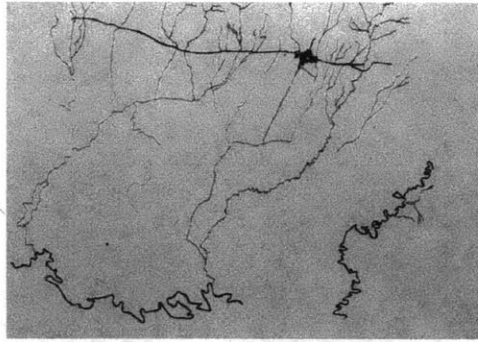


Fig. 13 Bogotá, 1600

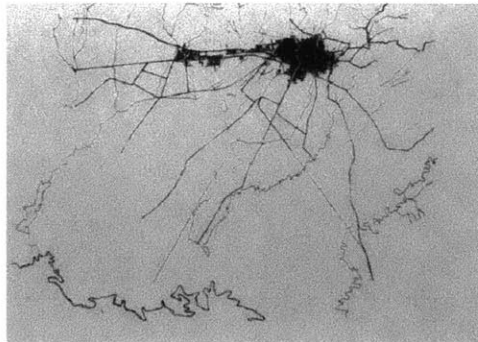


Fig. 14 Bogotá, 1900.

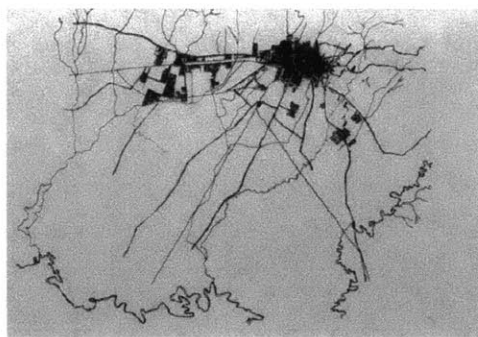


Fig. 15 Bogotá, 1930.

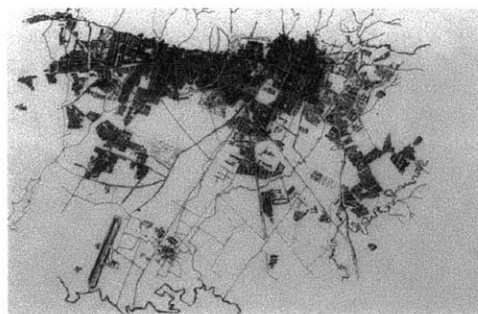


Fig. 16 Bogotá, 1960.

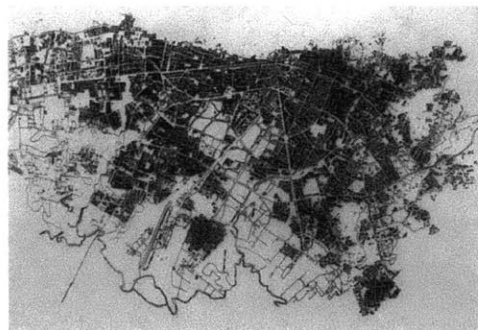


Fig. 17 Bogotá, 1992.



Fig. 18 Bogotá in 1958.



Fig. 19 Patio Bonito, informal settlements in the south west, Bogotá 1994.



Fig. 20 Bogotá, 1998.

The sixties has been considered the decade in which the growth rates related to the urbanization process were the highest in the history of the city (fig. 18). Two distinct processes can be traced in the development of the city since then, on the one hand urbanization and growth that corresponds to the different plans and programs developed by city administrations is the way in which the formal city has been developed; on the other hand and as a consequence of a continuous migration phenomena, illegal settlements usually located in periphery areas represent another way in which the city has expanded (fig. 19). From 1987 to 1998 the city incorporated to the urban area an average of 290 ha. per year; almost half of this area were illegal settlements<sup>4</sup>.

In general, these areas have public service infrastructure deficiencies and lack public space. Nevertheless, in recent years a considerable amount of informal settlements have been legalized and upgraded. Studies made for the development of POT and concerning the development of the city have concluded that in general growth patterns in the city have produced incomplete areas both in the formal city as well as in the informally developed settlements<sup>5</sup> (fig. 20).

Alamedas have been proposed in general for periphery areas which have, as it has been said, an informal origin. Alamedas are intended to contribute to complete the urban configuration as well as to provide these areas with a public space structure.

### 3. LA RED DE ALAMEDAS DE BOGOTÁ: ORIGINS AND ANTECEDENTS

Although La Red de Alamedas is a new kind of public space the origins of the project can be traced at least in two ways. On one hand, alamedas owe their development to a particular manner of intervention in certain areas in the city through the development of public space projects. The latter have been proposed in most cases, to overcome the difficulties imposed by the general city

<sup>4</sup> The city incorporated 3.206,37 ha from 1987 to 1998, an average of 290 ha per year; 44.1% of this area corresponded to informal settlements located in periphery areas such as Usme, Bosa, Ciudad Bolivar and Kennedy. Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial, Documento Técnico de Soporte, p. 158-159.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 160.

plans when dealing with specific areas in the city. In any case, public space projects have been used for their capacity to show immediate results and in the belief that they may trigger more complex urban processes. What is interesting in the present situation in Bogotá's city planning is that although alamedas were developed as urban design projects, because a new city plan, Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial POT was being developed at the same time, alamedas have been incorporated into the general city plan. Therefore, alamedas are no longer scattered public space interventions in the city but they have been included in a broader urban planning context as it will be demonstrated further on. On the other hand alamedas reinterpret the paseo or the promenade as an urban type; promenades and alamedas can be found in the urban development of the city since colonial times. Furthermore, the idea to include the particular geographical features of the city as public space, a condition inherent to alamedas' proposals, has been a constant intention of many plans in the city after Le Corbusier's Plan Piloto (1951)<sup>6</sup>.

### **3.1. A brief account of Bogotá city plans 1900 - 2000:**

Bogotá has had a consistent urban planning tradition since the XX century. Though it is not the intention of this document to trace the history of the city plans, a brief account is necessary to understand the context in which planning through projects and for the purpose of this document, the development of public space projects, started to become a recurrent practice in the urban development of the city.

At least four stages<sup>7</sup> in the evolution of general plans for Bogotá can be accounted for. The first experience in urbanism in Bogotá was "Bogotá Futuro" (1917- 23) a physical plan for the city expansion which was related to American and English city planning principles. The plan was conceived as a base to develop public infrastructure as well as a guide for public and private interventions. The plan lost very quickly its purpose and was not used as intended. This first experience was followed by the creation of the Department of Urbanism which was directed by the

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<sup>6</sup> Bonilla, Liliana et al. Plan zonal del centro de Bogotá, Preinversión N° 1, Fonade, Bogotá, Mayo 1988 (p. 42).

<sup>7</sup> Rodrigo Cortes, Del urbanismo a la Planeación en Bogotá (1900-990), Bogotá, abril 1995 (p. 5 -7).





Fig. 21 Karl Brunner projects, 1934 - 1944.



Fig. 22 Karl Brunner, Ciudad Satelite, 1934.

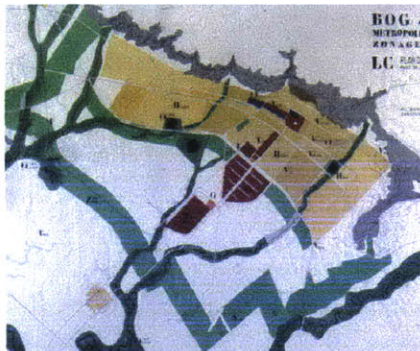


Fig. 23 Le Corbusier, metropolitan zoning plan, Bogotá Plan Piloto, 1951.

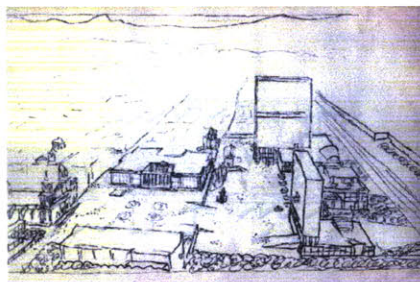


Fig. 24 Le Corbusier, civic center, Bogotá Plan Piloto, 1951.

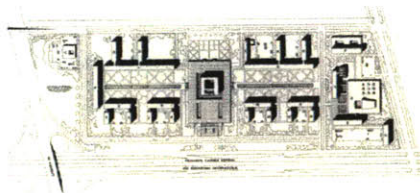


Fig. 25 Centro Administrativo Nacional, Bogotá 1955

Austrian architect and urban designer Karl Brunner from 1933 to 1944. Brunner who was primarily concerned with city form immediately translated the plan into projects. Complete fragments of the city as well as specific projects were designed under Brunner's direction. Projects of different types and scales which addressed particular aspects in the city were designed – the street network, housing projects of various kinds, residential districts and public space projects-. The latter included a park system and the development of paseos and promenades as it will be explained further on (figs. 21, 22).

A second stage was also related to physical planning and sought to introduce modern urban planning instruments. In the first place, a new city plan was devised, one that would perform as an alternative and a critical proposal to Brunner's approach and was supposed to be the plan of the city for the next fifty years. Plan Piloto (1951) proposed by Le Corbusier and developed in Plan Regulador (1953) by Wienert y Sert, was concerned with the construction of a modern city according to Le Corbusier's urban planning principles<sup>8</sup>. It also proposed four scales of intervention: the metropolitan scale, the urban scale, the sector and the civic center (figs. 23, 24). Although some of the proposals can still be recognized in the city - the zoning and the theory of the seven ways for example - the plan could not consolidate the practice of urban planning nor was it related to further plans as a whole. It was also never developed in a thorough manner because, as a result of Rojas Pinilla dictatorship period (1952-1958), public and private projects<sup>9</sup> that were not included in Plan Regulador were built (fig. 25); some of these projects affected the city form that was proposed by Plan Regulador and influenced the city growth towards the west side. After the dictatorship interlude, another attempt to develop modern urban planning instruments - though not as the logical continuity of Plan Regulador and based on the city's reality at the moment- was done by city mayor Jorge Gaitan

<sup>8</sup> The sector theory, the theory of the seven ways and the methodology of the "Grille CIAM", Rodrigo Cortes. Op.cit. (p. 23).

<sup>9</sup> Relocation of public administration buildings in what is called CAN, a new international airport, North and South Highways, housing and urban renewal projects, etc. Rodrigo Cortes. Op.cit. (p. 30 - 31).

<sup>10</sup> La planificación en Bogotá 1964, is the Plan's document. Rodrigo Cortes. Op.cit. (p. 34).





Fig. 26 Tejar neighborhood, ICT, Bogotá, c. 1953.



Fig. 27 100 Street and North Highway, Bogotá, 1968.

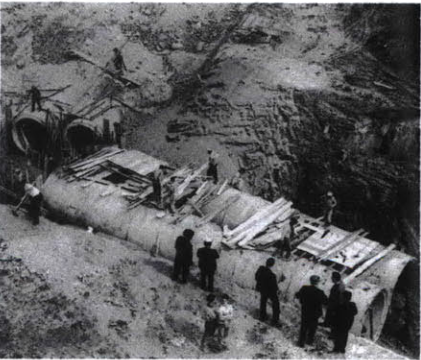


Fig. 28 Salitre sewerage system, Bogotá, 1968.

Cortes (1961-1966). The plan was concerned with the institutionalization of procedures and regulations and with the definition of politics related to urban form and the development of a specific urban structure for each part of the city<sup>10</sup> (fig.26).

At the end of the sixties, a third stage has been called economical planning. The latter was a consequence of a continental strategy that required Latin American countries to have development plans in order to qualify for international credit. The National Planning Department was founded (DNP, 1974) and the economist Lauchin Currie, was the main figure of the time. The period is characterized by an unprecedented number of informative, analytical and theoretical studies<sup>11</sup> on various aspects of development in general and city planning in particular, concerned with the exceptional demographical and physical growth figures of the time. In addition to these studies, an important number of projects and programs that had been proposed in previous years were developed during the administration of Virgilio Barco who was the city mayor from 1966 –1969. Those projects were required to update the urban structure of the city as a whole and influenced the actual form of the city (fig 27, 28). Another practice of this period was the development of Integral Urban Development Plans (1972-1978), that were proposed on the belief that general plans could not deal with urban growth and allowed the development of district public and street network infrastructure planning and implementation. Integral Urban Development Plans, were concerned with the construction of urban facilities and to a certain extent public space projects. New procedures and a coordination and management institution that would be in control of the whole process- the plan and its development- was created; parallel to this, the Urban Development Institution (IDU) was also established. The latter explains why public space projects have been developed through different city offices and institutions even in recent times and the fact that in the City Planning Department (DAPD) a public

<sup>10</sup> La planificación en Bogotá (City Planning in Bogotá), 1964 is the Plan's document . Rodrigo Cortes. Op.cit. (p. 34).

<sup>11</sup> Some of these studies are: Alternativas para el desarrollo de Bogotá (CID, U.N.1969), Plan de Desarrollo Nacional "Las Cuatro Estrategias" (DNP,1971), Estudio de desarrollo Urbano Fase II (DAPD, 1972), Ciudades dentro de las Ciudades (DNP, 1974). Rodrigo Cortes. Op.cit. (p. 43).

space office to develop public space projects was created. Moreover, it might have also influenced the development of public space interventions concerned with district planning that were not included in general plans though<sup>12</sup>.

Finally, in 1978 and 1990 the City Planning Department (DAPD) developed new urban regulations in Acuerdo 7/1979 and Acuerdo 6/1990. Acuerdo 7/1979 was not really a development plan and intended, to a certain extent, to implement through norms and regulations Fase II urban proposals and studies. It developed instruments to order and manage Bogotá's urban space but although there was a concern for urban form and urban structure there was no coordination between the city offices to develop expansion areas in a comprehensive way. Acuerdo 6/1990 was a further revision of Acuerdo 7/1979 in the same line of thought. Nevertheless, one of the innovations of Acuerdo 6/90 was to recover the idea that public space has a structuring role in the city<sup>13</sup>. Both Acuerdo 7/1979 and Acuerdo 6/1990 were developed to regulate the construction of the city through private agents. Therefore, it could be said that those regulations were the final stage in a process of abandonment of comprehensive city plans. The latter had been reduced to a set of procedures which regulate private and public agent interventions in the midst of general urban principles which do not have the capacity to become a real plan and can not define in a proper way the role of the city administration in the development of the city<sup>14</sup>.

Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial POT, was developed while Acuerdo 6/1990 was still being in force. Therefore one of POT's intention was to retrieve the tradition of the general plan in order to allow urban development through different intervention scales therefore, new planning instruments were devised as it will explained further on.

### **3.2. Origins and development of public space projects:**

Public space projects, have been developed as another way to improve certain areas in the city but have had different intentions. While some projects were one of the elements in a series of

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<sup>12</sup> Marcela Angel and Fernando Arias, Proyecto Tercer Milenio, Texto publicación, documento final (Publication text Tercer Milenio Project, final report), June 2001 (p. 13).

<sup>13</sup> Rodrigo Cortes. Op.cit. (p. 83).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. (p. 81).



programs and actions in a comprehensive plan for a particular area, others were just make up solutions. Nonetheless, public space projects have always been a consequence of concerns for the quality of the collective space and city form. Some of these projects will be described in order to explain the context in which La Red de Alamedas as a public space project was proposed.

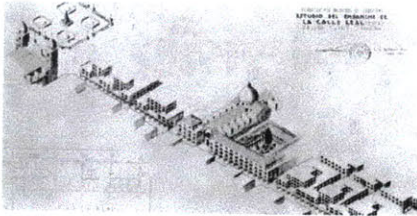


Fig. 29 Study for Calle Real, Karl Brunner, 1935.



Fig. 30 South ensanche, Karl Brunner, 1934

Brunner's proposals can be considered the first antecedent to the development of public space projects in the city<sup>15</sup>. When Brunner arrived to Bogotá, no regulations concerning public space standards had been developed. In Brunner's *Manual de Urbanismo*, the street system, monumental avenues, plazas and parkways are considered constituting elements of public space together with district layout, housing and urban buildings. For Brunner, public space was the expression of collective life in the city and a site for urban art<sup>16</sup>. Brunner's public space projects included regularization of streets, the design of new avenues, district planning and the development of a park system which included urban facilities (figs. 29, 30).

Although not a public project in itself, it is necessary to mention Le Corbusier's proposal for a green structure in the city in Plan Piloto (1951) which included the mountains and the rivers that cross the city from the east to the west<sup>17</sup>. In the plan for the metropolitan scale (fig. 31) the green structure just mentioned is evident. Moreover, the sector<sup>18</sup> is considered an autonomous urban unity which is crossed by a green system that follows natural river courses and the place where urban facilities should to be located (fig. 32). This green system corresponds in general terms

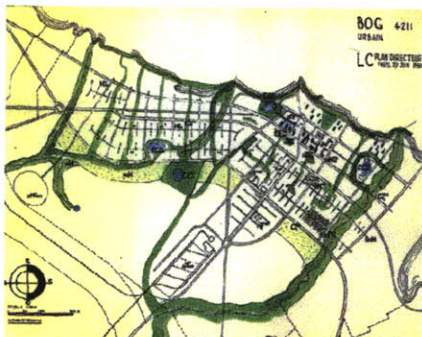


Fig. 31 Urban plan green areas structure, Bogotá Plan Piloto, Le Corbusier, 1951

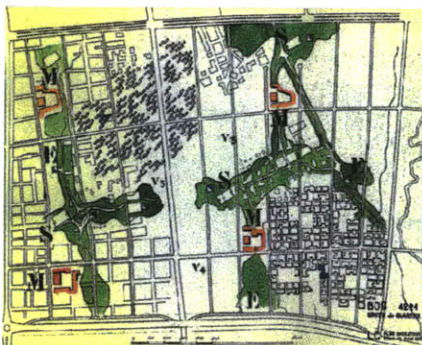


Fig. 32 Two sectors plan green areas structure, Bogotá Plan Piloto, Le Corbusier, 1951

<sup>15</sup> Fernando Cortes, Karl Brunner, arquitecto y urbanista 1887-1960. La construcción de la ciudad como espacio público. Catálogo de la exposición. Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, 1989. (p. 6).

<sup>16</sup> Karl Brunner, *Manual de Urbanismo* Tomo II, (p. 200).

<sup>17</sup> Le Corbusier states that the plan was developed according to the same laws, observations and discoveries followed by the founders of the city, thus the plan respects historical, geographical and topographical features of the city. "Here in Bogotá, history geography and topography, the sun, the water and the wind regimes, have conducted the Plan according to the same laws that the founders of the city has discovered, respected and followed". Le Corbusier, *Elaboration du Plan Régulateur* (p. 3). In Pedro Bannen Lannata, Op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> In Bogotá the sector area is defined by Le Corbusier in relation to the traditional city grid on block dimensions, In Pedro Bannen Lannata, Ibid.



to what the POT defines as the ecological structure of the city. Most city plans and public space projects since Le Corbusier Plan Piloto have incorporated the ecological structure as an essential public space element<sup>19</sup>.

In the eighties recent theories that favored an urban design approach to the city had influenced architects and urban designers in Bogotá. The Zone Plan for the Central Area of Bogotá (Plan Centro, 1985-1988), a comprehensive plan that sought to fill the gap left by the city plan in relation to Bogotá's city center is an example of this trend<sup>20</sup>. The Plan was organized around programs and developed through specific projects. Programs included improvement of residential areas, reorganization of public transport and public infrastructure completion. The plan sought to allow public and private interventions. One of the plan's innovations was the development of management instruments and public space projects that would allow short term actions and a rapid evaluation of the plan<sup>21</sup>.

Public space projects (figs. 33, 34, 35) were an essential component of Plan Centro. Improvement of pedestrian space and interventions on main street sections which included the facades were proposed. The ecological structure of the city was also taken into consideration. Although other attempts to improve public space in the city had been done previous to Plan Centro, the latter was pioneering in the management instruments and the projects developed. Plan Centro failed as a comprehensive plan but it set the basis for the development of public space projects in plans concerning particular areas in the city. A similar program for the city center "Del Centro el Centro", in which demonstrative public space projects were developed to produce immediate effects

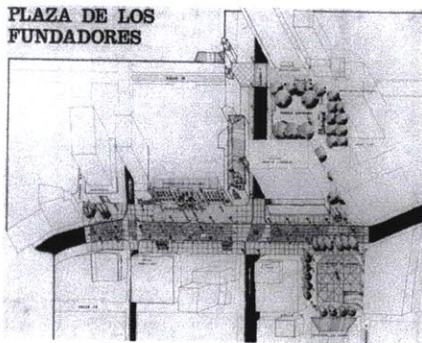


Fig. 33 Project for Plaza de los Fundadores. Plan Centro, Bogotá, 1985.

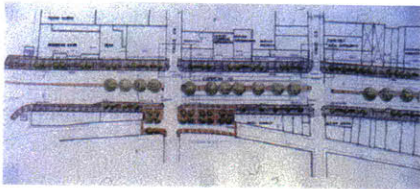


Fig. 34 Proposal for Carrera 10. Plan Centro, Bogotá, 1985.

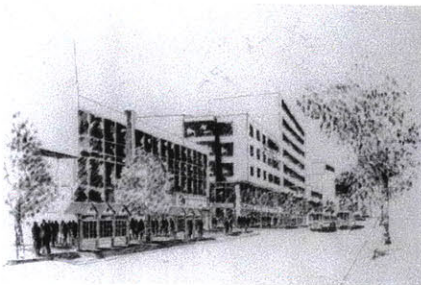


Fig. 35 Proposal for Carrera 10. Plan Centro, Bogotá, 1985.

<sup>19</sup> Liliana Bonilla et al. Op. cit. (p. 42).

<sup>20</sup> In the eighties Oriol Bohigas who was at the moment the Director of the City Hall; urban office in Barcelona, argued in Bogotá in a public space seminar, that a even if a general city plan may define almost everything, city form is the result of the addition of small projects that result from a deep and detailed study and understanding of specific areas in the city. He also proposed that public space projects and the completion of public infrastructure should precede any intervention on the urban structure of the city as a whole. Bohigas' ideas had already influenced architects and urban designers in Bogotá when Plan Centro was developed. Cuadernos Proa N° 8

<sup>21</sup> Bonilla, Liliana et al. Op. cit. (p. 35 - 55).



without any other urban design concerns had been proposed by the City Planning Department (DAPD) just before Plan Centro.

During the 1992-1995 city administration, an office for public space affairs was established in the City Planning Department (DAPD) as a result of the poor conditions of public space in the city and the need to regulate its production. The public space office (El Taller Profesional del Espacio Publico, TEP) intended to coordinate actions in the public space proposed by other city institutions and offices<sup>22</sup>, as well as to produce public space norms and regulations. The public space office was not going to be involved in the development of public space projects though. Nevertheless, during the 1995-1998 administration the office started to design public space projects. "Aprendiendo a sumar" (Learning to Add), was a program to improve public space in particular areas of the city that sought to coordinate the work of several city institutions. One of these projects was the urban design for Bosa's district main street (fig. 36). Furthermore, the first Alamedas were proposed at the time together with the public space projects Paseo Carrera 15 and Eje Ambiental Avenida Jimenez that will be described further on. These projects were designed by consultants though. Furthermore, the TEP launched an urban furniture design public competition which was the basis for the development of the urban furniture that is being used now in all public space projects in the city.



Fig. 36 Proposal for Calle 13 Bosa, Bogotá, 1997.

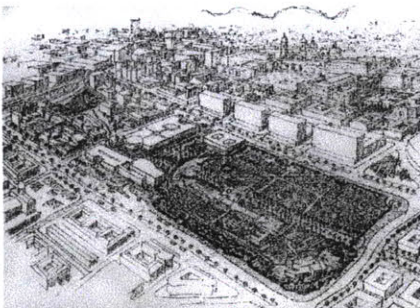


Fig. 37 Parque Tercer Milenio, Bogotá, 1998. Project Bueno and Montenegro.



Fig. 38 Parque Tercer Milenio, Bogotá, 2000. Final Master Plan.

During the 1998 - 2001 city administration an ambitious urban renewal project for the most deteriorated area in the city center proposed a public space as the core of the whole intervention. Tercer Milenio Park (figs. 37, 38) - still under construction- provides the area with a necessary public space but it also integrates and generates impacts in different and complementary fields of action such as the urban structure, the economic and the social aspects. Moreover, Tercer Milenio was based on Plan Centro's approach<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> As it has been mentioned at the end of the seventies, public space projects were developed by different city offices and institutions with no coordination among them.

<sup>23</sup> Marcela Angel and Fernando Arias, Op. cit.





Fig. 39 Carrera Séptima between Centenario and Independencia parks, Bogotá, c. 1900.



Fig. 40 Carrera Séptima near Plaza de Bolívar, Bogotá, 1988.

Some of the public space projects just described are the result of one single operation that combines planning, management and design. Public space projects have been developed in most cases in an effort to achieve results in order to overcome the problems involved in general plans. Besides, public spaces have been promoted to improve the quality of the collective space as well as the city's sustainability and productivity.

### 3.3. Alamedas and paseos in the urban development of Bogotá:

Though less important than plazas which have always been considered as the main representative public space, promenades have been present throughout the development of Bogotá. Furthermore, since colonial times Calle Real or Carrera Septima or (fig.39, 40) which was not planned as such has always been the main promenade of the city. Even today, all sort of public events including civic protests and cultural parades take place in Carrera Septima. Some of the examples that will be described show a concern for the street as a public space beyond its functional purpose.

- Alameda Vieja and Alameda Nueva in XVIII Bogotá:

Two promenades were built in XVIII century, at the end of the Spanish domination in Bogotá, Alameda Vieja and Alameda Nueva. Virrey Ezpeleta's intention was to embellish the city entrances with these tree lined promenades conceived as places for leisure. They were called alamedas to imitate a famous avenue in Lima Peru which was lined with alamos - poplar tree- although there is no poplar tree in Bogotá. It is possible to see in the plans of the time, that alamedas were in fact different from regular streets. Some of the plans of the city show alamedas were wider and lined with trees and had urban furniture<sup>24</sup>, a significant change from colonial streets and plazas that had no trees nor any natural element. Both alamedas started at San Victorino Plaza located in the first expansion of the traditional city. Alameda Vieja run north-south along what is now Carrera 13 to 26 Street where it met the major road to

<sup>24</sup> Carlos Martínez, Santafé, capital del Nuevo Reino de Granada, (p. 91) and Moises de la Rosa, Calles de Santa Fe de Bogotá. (p. 266).





Fig. 41 Alameda Vieja and Alameda Nueva in Carlos A. Pardo copy of Vicente Talledo y Rivera, Bogotá, 1810.



Fig. 42 Paseo Colón, Bogotá, 1917.

the north and Alameda Nueva run east-west along what is called today Jiménez Avenue. Alamedas were located in the outskirts of the city and they were used specially on Sundays<sup>25</sup> (fig. 41).

- Paseo Colón:

The notion of public space was developed in Bogotá during the VII and VIII centuries in an intent to consolidate an urban culture that could be expressed through architecture and collective spaces. Thus, during the republican period<sup>26</sup> actions on public space were centered on the development of public parks<sup>27</sup> and avenues. Some institutions were in charge of the enhancement of these public spaces which were considered as places for contemplation and permanence. In this context of ideas, Colon Avenue or Paseo Colon (fig. 42) was the result of the development of two traditions, the colonial alameda and the European boulevard. Paseo Colon was designed in 1917 as a two carriage way avenue with very wide sidewalks to connect the main railroad station of the moment, Estacion de la Sabana and Plaza de Narino. It was designed as an entrance to the city and the logic continuation of the colonial alameda since it was also located in the west side of the city. Avenida Colon was an impressive paseo at the time, a fact which is revealed through the amount of images dedicated to the avenue in books and magazines concerning the development of Bogotá during the first decades of the XX century.

- Paseo Bolívar and Caracas Avenue:

Paseo Bolívar was developed by Karl Brunner as a promenade with urban balconies to enjoy the view of the city from the eastern mountains thus to profit from the particular natural conditions of the city. It is interesting to note that in Brunner's Manual de Urbanismo, Paseo Bolivar is included among sea shore and lake promenades. Brunner also designed Caracas Avenue as a residential avenue with a tree lined promenade in the middle of traffic lanes which connected the recently built residential districts in the northern expansion of the city<sup>28</sup>. Now,

<sup>25</sup> Carlos Martínez, Op. cit. (p. 90 - 161).

<sup>26</sup> Republican period is referred to the architecture and urban design produced in Colombia from 1880 to 1930 in Silvia Arango, Historia de la Arquitectura Colombiana, (p. 129 - 173).

<sup>27</sup> Colonial plazas were redesigned as small European parks with trees and urban furniture. Silvia Arango, Op. cit.





Fig. 43 Paseo Bolívar, Karl Brunner, Bogotá, 1935



Fig. 44 Avenida Caracas, Karl Brunner, Bogotá, 1938.



Fig. 45 Paseo urbano Carrera 15, Bogotá, 2000. Proposal for a green areas structure.



Fig. 46 - 47 Paseo urbano Carrera 15, Bogotá, 2000.

it is still possible to see some of the urban balconies proposed along Paseo Bolívar; Caracas Avenue is a major public transportation corridor and nothing is left from Brunner's project (figs. 43, 44).

In the recent development of Bogotá, alamedas owe their development to some of the public projects proposed during 1995-1998 administration as it has been already mentioned in chapter 3.2.

- Paseo Urbano Carrera 15, Eje Ambiental Jiménez Avenue and the first Alamedas:

Paseo Urbano Carrera 15, is a 3 km long promenade which was proposed as a demonstrative intervention along Carrera 15, a very popular but deteriorated commercial street located in the expanded center of the city<sup>29</sup>. Its purpose was the reanimation of the commercial street and the improvement of its public space. The project sought to include the street in a comprehensive urban design project (figs. 45, 46, 47).

Carrera 15 public space was the main feature of the urban design project and was used to articulate existing open spaces, green areas and parks as well as new pedestrian spaces. Sidewalks were widened and car parking on the side walk was banned, -sidewalks as in many other places in the city had progressively been invaded by car parking-. A system of underground parking areas was also proposed. The project included the development of both a special urban furniture and a prefabricated concrete pavement elements. A Community participation process was also devised. The project had a lot difficulties to get implemented but is now built and works successfully.

- Eje Ambiental Jiménez Avenue (figs. 48, 49) is a pedestrian linear public space in Bogotá's traditional city center along Jiménez Avenue which runs east-west from the eastern

<sup>28</sup> Karl Brunner, Op. cit. (p. 251 - 257).

<sup>29</sup> The expanded center of the city is the central area of the city.



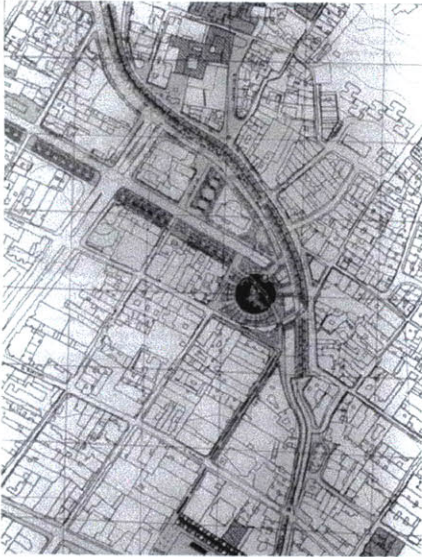


Fig. 48 - 49 Eje ambiental Jiménez Avenue, Bogotá, 2001.

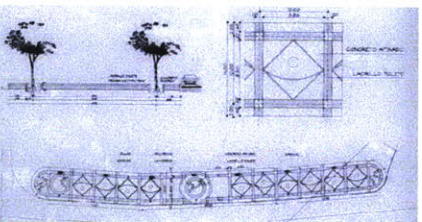


Fig. 50 Alamedas' project, Bogotá, 1996.



Fig. 51 Alameda Fátima, Bogotá, 1999.

mountains to San Victorino Plaza. Avenida Jimenez has always been an important street in Bogotá city center. The sinuosity of San Francisco River course was and remains a braking line in the grid pattern of the traditional city. Jimenez Avenue was developed at the end of XIX and the beginning of the XX once San Francisco River was finally channelled. Along the avenue, monumental public buildings as well as the first high rise commercial buildings were built. Throughout Jimenez Avenue the presence of the natural scenery of mountains as a back stage curtain to architecture is permanent and offers a landscape which is part of the character of the city. The project's intention was to make evident the urban landscaping conditions of the avenue and bring to the level of the street San Francisco River *memoire* through the construction of a thin linear water basin that runs in the middle of the pedestrian promenade. The project is built but the car and public transport circulation reorganization that was proposed in the project is still to be solved.

- Alamedas (fig. 50) was a public space program developed for the south- west area. Alamedas were proposed for remnant space in neighborhoods where there is no public space available. Alamedas were 13m wide in average and 200 to 300m long and were supposed to be used for temporary events such as fairs and markets. Only two of these Alamedas were built, Alameda Fatima (fig. 51) in Venecia neighborhood and alameda Arborizadora Baja in Ciudad Bolivar district.

These public space projects were proposed by Taller del espacio Publico within the City Planning Department and developed by consultants and they influenced La Red de Alamedas in various ways.

On one hand these projects regained the promenade or the paseo as a pedestrian space and as an urban type. On the other hand, Alamedas program and Paseo Urbano Carrera 15 were the starting point for the development of an urban furniture and public space pavement handbook, *Cartilla de mobiliario urbano y Cartilla de andenes*, which were produced by the TEP during the 1998-2001 city administration and have been used in public projects ever since.

All public space interventions throughout the city use now the same urban furniture and pavements. This has produced a certain level of order in a city that lacks it as a general rule. Examples of the same concern related to a systematization and standardization of public space elements and urban furniture can be seen in Barcelona's public space projects<sup>30</sup> and even in Haussmann projects for Paris<sup>31</sup>.

#### **4. LA RED DE ALAMEDAS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RECENT CITY PLANS:**

La Red de Alamedas was proposed during the last city administration (1998-2001) and developed by El taller del espacio Público. City hall and the TEP agreed on the corridors and the actual projects were developed by consultants. Alamedas have also been included in the POT as public space projects, as it has been already mentioned. Therefore a revision of these two events is necessary to understand the context in which alamedas were proposed and the role they play in the new plan.

##### **4.1. La Red de Alamedas and the city administration plan 1998-2001:**

Bogotá underwent a profound physical transformation during Enrique Penalosa's administration, Bogotá's city mayor from 1998 to 2001. Some of the facts that explain this transformation have

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<sup>30</sup> In Barcelona, in the eighties and nineties an ambitious and comprehensive action sought to improve and increase the amount of public space in the city. The development of an appropriate urban furniture was also part of the strategy.

<sup>31</sup> "On the one side, circulation optimization was the result of great scale interventions but at the same time an intimate scale was obtained through the work in detail of urban furniture and the construction process. .... (Haussmann and Alphand) they managed a balance between technical rigor and the construction of places of urbanity." Free translation from Françoise Choay and Vincent Saint Marie Gautier, *Los Andenes de París, genesis de una escala de proximidad en el siglo XIX* (original title "I marcapiedi di Parigi. Genesis di una scala di proximità nel XIX secolo 1997) in *Revista Arquitecturas* No 6, p 18-23 Bogotá, 2000.

to do with a continuous increase in the city budget since 1992<sup>32</sup>, a change in the attitude of the people towards city administrators and their own role as citizens, and Penalosa's particular vision of the development of the city in which public space plays a significant role.

The previous city administration government plan (1995-1998)<sup>33</sup>, had as its chore the development of a "civilian culture" (cultura ciudadana); an idea that could be summarized in the people's respect for the law and the rules required to live together in the city and the acknowledgment of citizens rights and duties in a self regulating attitude. This idea had a significant influence in the people of Bogotá and was the beginning of a change in the people's behavior in the city. The city administration developed public space projects<sup>34</sup> to regain places where people would perform as citizens. For Antanas Mockus, city mayor from 1995 to 1998 public space had an educational content. Mockus is at the moment city mayor of Bogotá for the second time for the period 2001-2004. In that sense, another aspect that has improved in the city is the continuity of plans, programs and projects.

City mayor Penalosa was deeply concerned with the poor quality of life in Bogotá and the fact that citizens had progressively surrendered to this situation. The construction of a more

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<sup>32</sup> Bogotá is governed by a city mayor, elected by the citizens since 1988, who manages the city through various city offices and institutions as well as local city halls. Very short government periods have been one of the flaws of the city management together with limited resources as a consequence of a poor tax collection among many other facts. From 1992 to 1994, city mayor Jaime Castro managed to make a necessary tax reform that had been attempted by previous city majors. Castro also advanced in the decentralization process started by president Betancur (1982-1986). Since then, the city resources have gradually improved to the point that Peñalosa's government was one of the wealthiest administration the city had in many years. Julio Davila and Alan Gilbert. *Los alcaldes mayores y la gestión de Bogotá, 1961-2000*.

<sup>33</sup> Public space was one of the plan's six priorities and was concerned with the recuperation of places in which people act as citizens in Antanas Mockus city plan. *Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá, Proyecto de Plan de Desarrollo Económico y de Obras Públicas para Santa Fe de Bogotá, D.C. 1995-1998. "Formar Ciudad"* (p. 5).

<sup>34</sup> Eje ambiental Av. Jiménez, Paseo Carrera 15 and the first alamedas that have been already described were proposed during the 1995-1998 city administration.



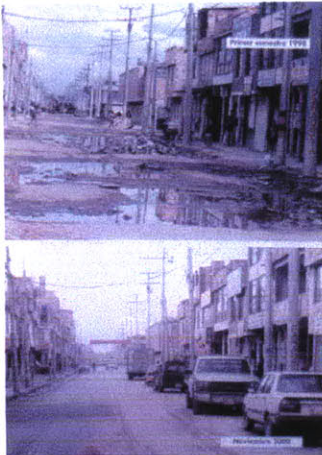


Fig. 52 -53 Street upgrading, Bogotá, 1998 - 2000.



Fig. 54 Alameda Parque Nacional, Bogotá, 2000.



Fig. 55 Neighborhood park in Fontibón, Bogotá, 2000



Fig. 56 Project for Cordoba wetland, Bogotá, 2000.

egalitarian and enjoyable city that would become as a consequence a more competitive and sustainable one, was at the basis of Peñalosa's government plan, "Por la Bogotá que queremos"<sup>35</sup>. The plan's objective was to produce a deep transformation in the way of living and in the quality of life in the city. Alamedas and promenades are mentioned in the government plan as one of the public space elements together with the park system, sidewalks, green areas, plazas and streets (figs. 52, 53, 54, 55, 56).

Furthermore, for the 1998-2001 city administration improving life conditions in the city was related to the quality and availability of collective spaces. According to Peñalosa, urban design and urban policy can be a powerful tool to create a more egalitarian society. Moreover, in Peñalosa's opinion " ..it may seem that in third world cities with so many unmet needs, parks would be a frivolity. On the contrary, in cities where citizens lack so much in terms of amenities and consumption, it is quicker and more effective to distribute quality of life through public goods such as parks, than to increase incomes or improve income distribution. It is impossible to provide citizens with certain individual consumer goods and services such as cars, computers (.....). However it is possible to give them excellent schools, libraries, sidewalks, plazas and parks. Public pedestrian space is also important to a democratic society because pedestrian space is the place where people meet as equals (.....), roads will be paved someday. But the pedestrian street evidences respect for the people. It creates a new sense of belonging and community; (pedestrian space) transforms people's lives"<sup>36</sup>.

During the 1998-2001 administration, parks of all sizes including various facilities were built and improved and a park a system -

<sup>35</sup> Public space was included in many of the plan's priorities. Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social y de Obras Públicas, 1998 -2001. Op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> Enrique Peñalosa, Towards an egalitarian city, Jakarta, Lecture text. November, 2001. The same ideas were expressed by Peñalosa in a recent interview for Cambio magazine, in Bogota April 2002.



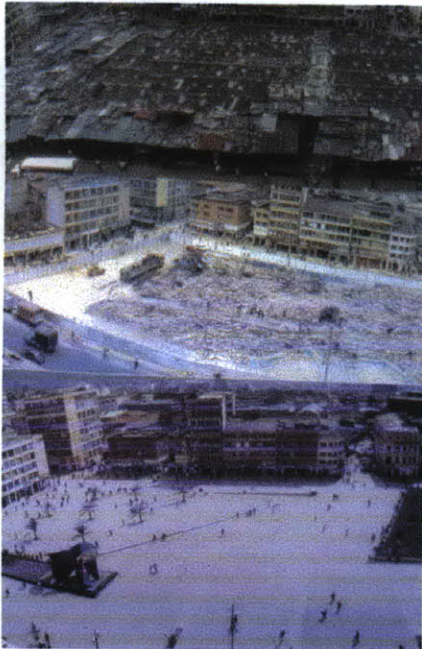


Fig. 57 - 58 Renovation Plaza San Victorino, Taller del Espacio Público, DAPD, 1998 - 2000, Bogotá.



Fig. 59

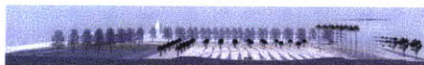


Fig. 60 Project for Plaza de la Hoja, Taller del Espacio Público, DAPD, 1998 - 2000, Bogotá.

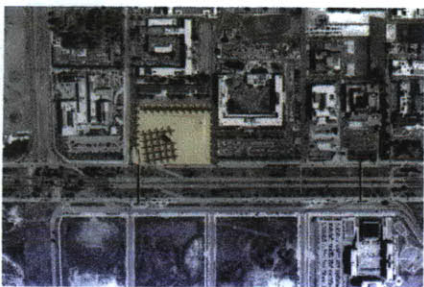


Fig. 61 Project for Plaza de los Caídos, Taller del Espacio Público, DAPD, 1998 - 2000, Bogotá.

which gathered the efforts made in this sense in the city for many years- was established<sup>37</sup>. The park system included improvement and protection of natural elements therefore parks along wetlands and natural systems were also proposed and built.

In Peñalosa's vision pedestrian circulation is a fundamental aspect of living together in the city and also necessary for the construction of a more egalitarian city; pedestrian circulation encourages people to meet and enjoy the city. Therefore, pedestrian space was recovered from all kind of private abuse such as cars invading sidewalks, residential areas closing public green spaces for private use or street vendors occupying sidewalks. An impressive sidewalk improving and construction crusade all over the city was also implemented.

In relation to transportation<sup>38</sup>, Peñalosa had also a particular interest the bicycle as another transport system and in bicycle riding for leisure. Bicycle circulation in a temperate weather such as the one in Bogotá is possible all year long and it is a way to reduce air contamination in Peñalosa's belief.

In the context of these ideas at the end of the 1998-2001 city administrative period La Red de Alamedas was proposed through the El Taller de Espacio Publico, (TEP) an office within the City Planning Department (DAPD) as it has been mentioned already, which also became an active consultant office on public space to the City Hall. During Peñalosa's administration the TEP was involved in the design and management of a series of public space projects all over the city which included plazas, parks, pedestrian streets and improvement of remnant public spaces in the city. Some of these public space projects were designed by the TEP team and developed through other city institutions (figs. 57, 58, 59, 60, 61). The TEP also developed an urban furniture and pavement handbook (Cartilla de amoblamiento urbano y Cartilla de andenes)

#### 4.2 La Red de Alamedas and the POT:

Since the construction of alameda projects depends on the POT

<sup>37</sup> The park system received the main prize in XX Colombian Architecture Bienal, 2000.

<sup>38</sup> During the 1998-2001 Transmilenio a public transport system consisting in a network of exclusive lines for articulated buses was developed. Transmilenio is a significant improvement in Bogotá's public transport system which has been always a problem in the city due to its poor quality in general terms.

development and evolution, a revision of the plan's general proposals and instrument may give clues to the way in which alamedas will be included as a public space in the urban structure of the areas where alamedas will be developed.

For the past 25 years, as it has been described in chapter 3, the development of the city of Bogotá has been the result of two development plans Acuerdo 7/79 and Acuerdo 6/90 . Their main objective was regulation of the urbanization process and the development and enforcement of building codes<sup>39</sup>. After the 1990 Colombian Constitution, Urban Development Law 388 of 1997 required all cities and municipalities to formulate a territorial regulating plan (Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial, POT) by December 1999. In the case of Bogotá the Plan was seen as an opportunity to recover a planning tradition in the city which had been progressively abandoned. The POT offers new planning instruments and establishes new relations between public and private agents in the development of the city among many other things.

Alamedas' proposals can be understood in the light of some of the issues concerning the plan,

- The importance accorded to public space in the development of the city.
- The definition of an ecological structure and its relation to public space.
- The role of public agents in the construction of the city.
- The definition of the periphery areas .
- The development of new planning instruments.

Some of these issues were included in the plan's objectives, they are also part of the plan's application and are related to the plan's instruments.

The importance of public space in the development of the city:  
As it has been expressed before, since the eighties the role of public space in the development of Bogotá has been the subject of an increasing interest and preoccupation. Nonetheless,

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<sup>39</sup> Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial, POT, Documento Técnico de Soporte. Op. cit.



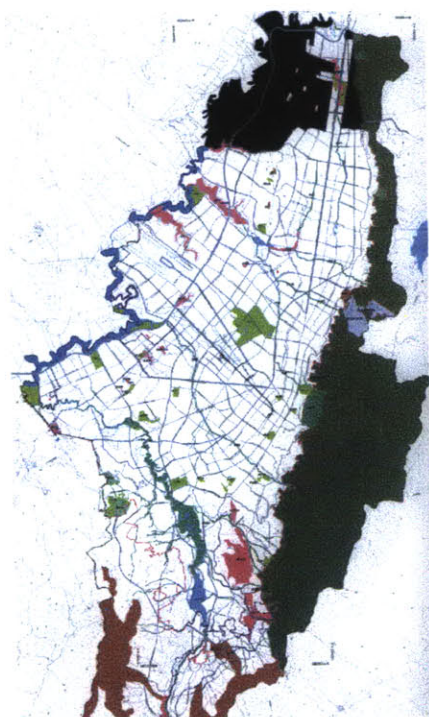


Fig. 62 Ecological structure, POT, DAPD, Bogotá 2000.

according to POT's diagnosis in relation to public space which has been included in the technical support document, DTS (Documento Técnico de Soporte)<sup>40</sup> since the sixties the city administration had not proposed significant open space projects<sup>41</sup>. In the POT, public space is seen as an instrument to improve living conditions in the city as well as a vehicle to build scenarios for the enjoyment of urban life. Furthermore, public space is seen as the support of the collective interests and as a mean to build a more egalitarian city. Improving the physical and environmental quality of public space as a way to make better living conditions in the city in order to attain social equity, was included in the plan's general economic and physical objectives<sup>42</sup>.

Moreover, in the POT public space is an instrument to structure the development of the city. In the Plan public space is one of the general systems together with the street structure and its components, the transportation system, the urban facilities and the public service infrastructure. Furthermore, in the POT, general systems are considered the field of action of public administration and their development should be prioritized in order to build the city in an efficient and orderly manner; besides, general systems should give form to the city. The POT seeks to continue the efforts made by the 1998 to 2001 city administration in this sense.

Pedestrian circulation and the creation of places to encourage citizen's encounters are considered a priority in the development of public spaces in the plan. Therefore, alamedas as pedestrian spaces have a privileged role in the urban development of the city according to the POT. Alamedas have been included as public

<sup>40</sup> Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial, POT. Documento Técnico de Soporte DTS, Op. cit., contains a description of the technical processes followed in the Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial formulation, their development and application.

<sup>41</sup> In relation to the minimum of 10m<sup>2</sup>/ person of parks and green areas according to HABITAT standards, Bogotá had only 2,87 m<sup>2</sup>/habitant in 1998. The latter is consistent with 1998-2001 city administration in which a considerable effort to improve these figures was made. Ibid. (p.141)

<sup>42</sup> Ibid (p.182)

space for pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the POT(fig. 62).

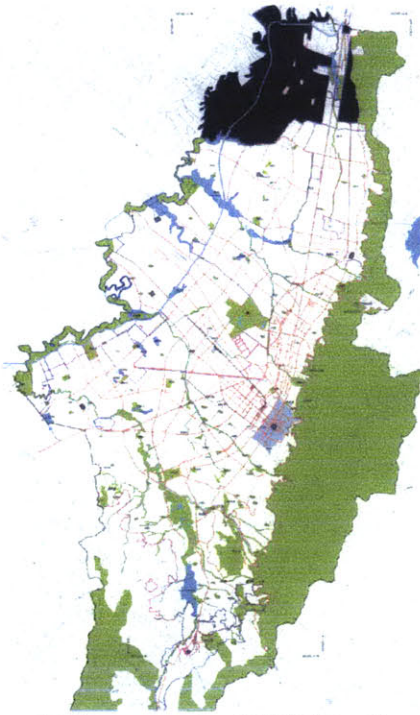


Fig. 63 Public space structure, POT, DAPD, Bogotá 2000.

**The definition of the ecological structure of the city:**  
The ecological structure is one of the three components of the new planning model. The other two are the urban structure and the rural territory.

The natural structure in the city includes by Bogotá River, and its affluents, the wetland system, the mountains and the protected areas. The latter include forests and natural systems. Additionally, the park system and the city green spaces are also considered as part of the ecological structure. The intention of POT in defining the ecological structure is to protect natural processes and to promote urban sustainability; but also to provide connections since it has been progressively fragmented due to urbanization. The definition of an ecological structure seeks to prevent further invasion by informal settlements as well as planned urbanizations -as has been the practice for the last years- and its protection against improper exploitation and contamination due to urban development and industrial processes in the city. Besides, POT encourages public appropriation and use of these natural scenarios and landscapes as places for recreation, education and enjoyment (fig. 63).

Almost all alamedas' proposed corridors are related to this ecological structure, therefore alamedas will work as connectors of these areas. Alamedas will link both natural systems as rivers, wetlands and preserved areas as well as the different kind of urban parks. Furthermore, alamedas will allow public use of natural scenarios and places of a great landscape value which are now banned for public use as we shall see in the following chapter.

**The role of public agents in the construction of the city:**  
One of the main interest of the POT is to recuperate the role of public agents in the construction of the city. As a consequence of previous plans more interested in regulating private interventions, the development of public transport, public services and urban facilities have been left behind in the development of the city. For the POT the recuperation of public urbanism is necessary for a proper distribution of city opportunities and to improve urban deficiencies and marginal conditions. In POT, building collective interest projects and programs in the city is a task of public agents.



As it has been said before, the construction and improvement of general systems and therefore public space as one of its components is the field of action of public administration. Therefore, alamedas will be developed by city administrations as a collective interest project.

**The definition of the periphery of the city :**

Periphery areas are considered in the POT places for urban expansion but more important, an opportunity to build a better city as well as to improve the existing conditions through public urbanism. Most alamedas are located in the north, south and west expansion area of the city and have been included as one of the projects to improve the urban structure of expansion areas.

**The new planning instruments:**

One of the innovations of the POT is the creation of new planning instruments as an alternative to the development of the city through very small areas or single lot developments. Some of these instruments are partial plans, structuring operations, zone plans unities (UPZ) and actions units. These new instruments were developed with the intention to overcome general plans' difficulties when dealing with different scales of intervention.

Structuring operations have been defined in the POT as an urban management device to develop comprehensive interventions in strategic areas in the city. Structuring operations were proposed to fight the recent trend that would only attend a particular aspect of urban development without taking into consideration related actions or projects. For example building a major street without considering the opportunity to develop a necessary and thorough urban renewal program along the new street. This kind of approach to urban development with few exceptions has been the rule in Bogotá's recent urban development.

Each one of the proposed structuring operations includes projects and programs to be developed through public agents which may include the completion of the street system, public transportation systems, urban facilities construction, public space projects, as well as housing and urban renovation programs. At the same

time structuring operations define opportunity areas for the development of private interventions.

Alamedas' projects are part of the public space system in the proposed structuring operations. In some areas such as the west border, Alameda El Porvenir as it will be shown later in the document is considered the area's structuring public space project.

Alamedas are consistent with the plan in many ways:

- Most alamedas are located in the periphery as projects that will help to consolidate or define the urban structure of these areas.
- Most alamedas are related to what the POT has defined as the ecological structure.
- Most alamedas are public space projects that will work as an alternative circulation network as well as a leisure place.
- Most alamedas have been included in structuring operations to be developed in the POT.

#### **5. LA RED DE ALAMEDAS DE BOGOTÁ: DESCRIPTION.**

A description of alamedas concerning La Red de Alamedas de Bogotá is the subject of the following chapter. In addition to a general description of the corridors according to their location and the character of the alamedas, a matrix with a classification of the different types of alamedas is the conclusion of the chapter (fig. 64).

As it has been said before, La Red de Alamedas de Bogotá is a network of tree lined linear paths that combine pedestrian and bicycle circulation. One of the intentions of alamedas is to profit from the ecological structure and to provide the city with a good quality public space that will connect parks, green spaces and natural systems as well as residential areas and urban facilities. Another intention of alamedas is to provide places for recreation and enjoyment of urban life and to allow an alternative way to circulate in the city. In certain areas, alamedas may help to consolidate the urban structure.

Alamedas are in fact very simple and consist of a reduced repertoire of elements. Alamedas are in general 15m width on average and may become plazas when special urban conditions occur along the corridor such as a major street junction, an urban facility or certain natural elements. Alamedas are 17 km to 1 km long depending on the area of the city where they are to be developed.

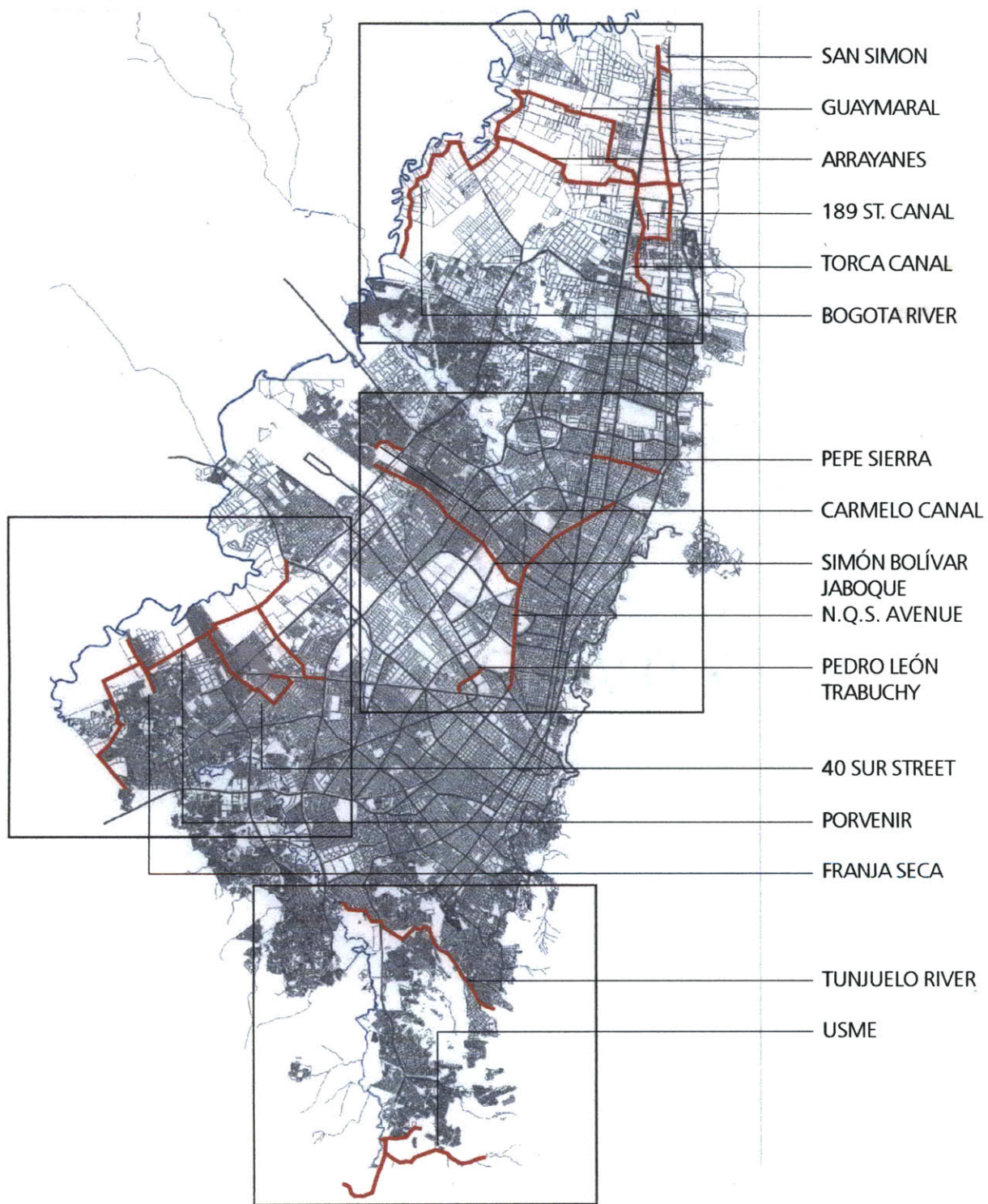


Fig.64 Plan Red de Alamedas

In relation to necessary land acquisition to develop alamedas, it is possible to say that in general the selected corridors go through areas belonging to the city in most cases. This is important because otherwise land acquisition would make alamedas too expensive. For example, a protection area belonging to the city is usually available along canals, river borders and wetlands. Another kind of public land is the protection area – usually ten meters wide-required along certain thoroughfares; thus alamedas have been developed along these areas. Another corridor that was used to develop alamedas was the space provision for a projected street. In this case the section of the projected street was transformed to allow the development of an alameda. Furthermore, parks and green areas left by residential developments as well as green spaces between street lanes are also another example of public property that was used to define alamedas' corridors. Nevertheless, in most cases a certain quantity of land acquisition will be necessary in order to develop alamedas.

Moreover, most of the alamedas that will be described in this chapter have been fully developed as urban design projects in which the technical studies, projects coordination and the approvals required by the different city offices was carried through. Also, a research on land acquisition was done. The actual designs were developed through a system of modules and plazas. All the pavement elements, the tree protection fixtures and the urban furniture used in the projects come from the public space handbook developed by T E P. Thus, alamedas as most public space projects developed in the last city administration, will have a recognizable identity and will contribute to give order to public space interventions in the city.

Except for Alameda N.Q.S, Alameda Pepe Sierra, Alameda Pedro Leon Trabuchy and some parts of Alameda Jaboque, which are sited in the central city, all the proposed alamedas are located in the periphery of the city which has been defined as large expansion areas lacking basic water and sewerage systems as well as urban facilities<sup>43</sup>. Expansion areas are located in the north, the south

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<sup>43</sup> Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial de Bogotá, POT. DTS, Op. cit. (p. 79 - 81)



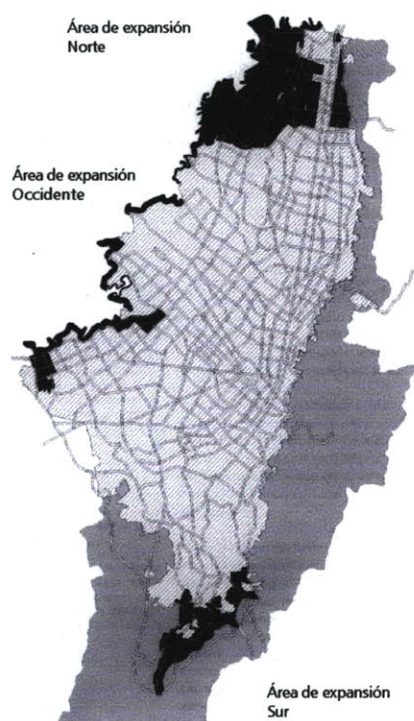


Fig.65 Expansion areas, POT, DAPD, Bogotá 2000.

west and the south east of the city (fig. 65). These areas are difficult to reach and are characterized by incomplete developments that take a long time to consolidate. In general, these areas require public investment in infrastructure as well as a revision of their urban structure as a whole. Thus, alamedas are intended to help in the consolidation of the urban structure of expansion areas.

As it has been said before, alamedas have been included in some of the structuring urban operations. Though certain operations may need further study, alamedas in some cases have been considered the main public space in the operation. Therefore, alamedas are not just public space projects but they may contribute to organize the urban structure of the certain periphery areas.

### 5.1. Alamedas in the north area:

The alamedas located in this area are: Alameda Bogotá River, Alameda Arrayanes, Alameda Guaymaral, Alameda 189th St. Canal, Alameda Torca Canal, and Alameda San Simon.

The north area has not been largely transformed so far. High and low income residential areas coexist with metropolitan urban facilities such as private schools, country clubs, private sports clubs and park cemeteries. There is also industrial and agricultural activities in the area. Public service infrastructure is scarcely developed and much of the water supply and sewerage system is still rural. The development of the north expansion area was objected by the Ministry of Environment <sup>44</sup>. Nevertheless, general POT regulations were applied to the north expansion and allowed urban expansion beyond the existing urban areas, along the corridor of North Highway (Autopista Norte), and the San Simon area. Another urban expansion zone next to projected Guaymaral metropolitan park was also proposed. Large protection areas that include farmlands and natural systems were established to both sides of existing and projected urban areas. A land provision for further expansion of the city street network was made. The development of water supply and sewerage projects is yet to be

<sup>44</sup> Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial, POT. Decree No 617 /2000 (p. 29-36).



Fig.66 North expansion area, POT, DAPD, Bogotá 2000.



Fig.67 North Highway structuring operation, POT, DAPD, Bogotá 2000.

approved though<sup>45</sup> (fig. 66).

A POT structuring operation<sup>46</sup> (fig. 67) has been proposed along North Highway, the main thoroughfare in the area that connects the city to the north territory. While taking advantage of the particular natural conditions of the area, alamedas are intended to allow a continuous circulation and connection between Bogotá River and the eastern mountains, principal elements of the ecological structure of the city as it has been said before. This connection is not evident nor possible at the moment. Alamedas in the north have two characters related to the structure of the area though. Alamedas below North Highway, Bogotá River, Arrayanes and to a certain extent Guaymaral have a more ecological character while alamedas up North Highway, Torca Canal, 189th St. Canal and San Simon have a more urban condition.

Alameda Bogotá River (figs. 68 ,69), is a 9,5 km winding linear path proposed along and at the edge of the river's preservation and management bank. As it has been said, the river is the west limit of the urbana area. The alameda starts at the same place as Alameda Guaymaral and ends at Conejera wetland. Its design takes advantage of all the natural systems alongside the corridor consisting in canals, ponds and wetlands, to produce a rich variety of landscape sceneries. Pedestrian and bicycle paths are differentiated by means of a level change and a balcony towards the river enhances it's ecological and educational character.

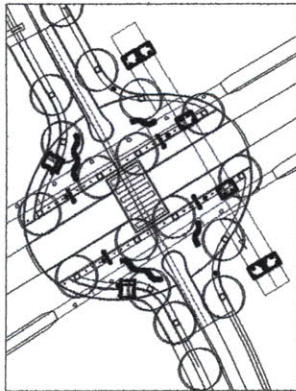
Both alamedas Guaymaral and Arrayanes have been proposed as two east-west corridors that will connect the Bogotá River's bank to the eastern mountains, a well preserved ecological zone in this part of the city. These mountains, acting as a natural backstage curtain wall, are an impressive natural scenery in the area.

Alameda Guaymaral (figs. 70, 71) starts at Bogotá River and in most of the 7km. corridor will perform as the border of the future Guaymaral metropolitan park that stretches along one of the areas where urban expansion has been allowed. It will also connect urban facilities mainly consisting in schools. Alameda Guaymaral ends at Torca wetland next to North Highway. Alameda Arrayanes (figs. 72 ,73) also starts at Bogotá River Alameda but will go

<sup>45</sup> POT. Decree 1110/2000, is the decree for the north area.

<sup>46</sup> Cuadernos del POT, Operaciones Estructurantes (p. 61).

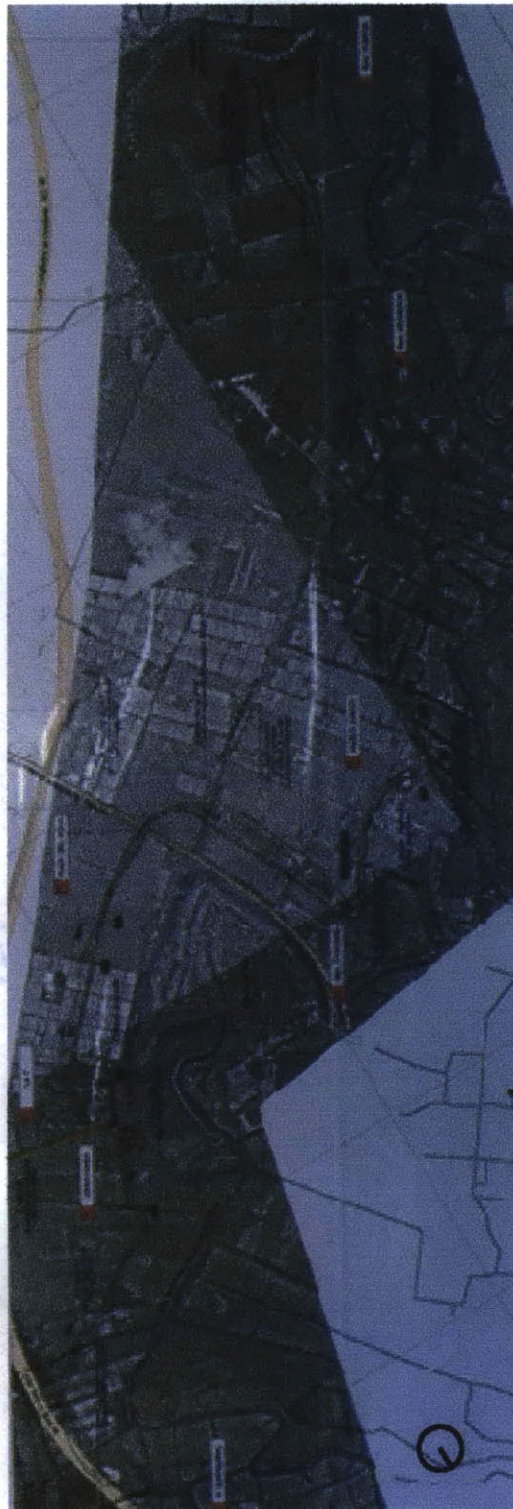




Alameda Plaza



Alameda Corridor



0  
500  
1 Km.

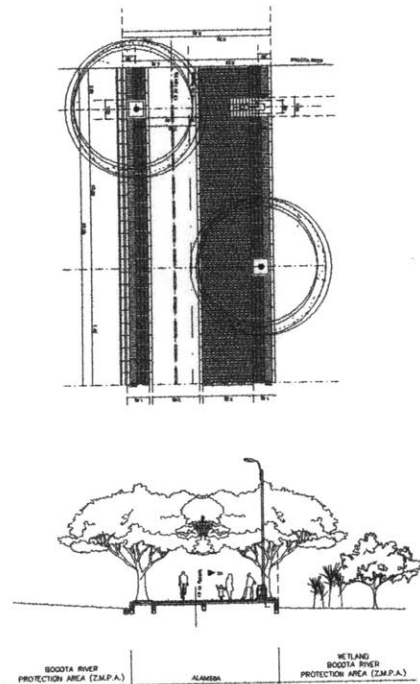
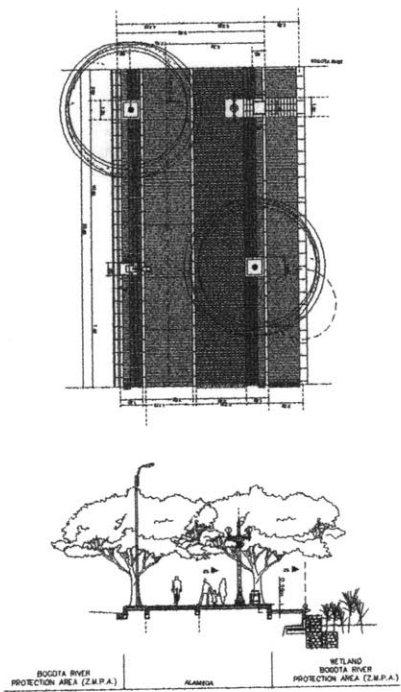
# ALAMEDA BOGOTA RIVER

Length : 9.5 Km.  
(5.9 Miles)  
Width : 9.4 - 14.8 Mt.  
(30.8 - 48.5 Feet)

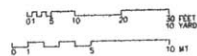


Master Plan. Fig. 68

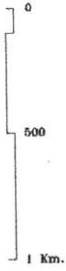




Typical Module



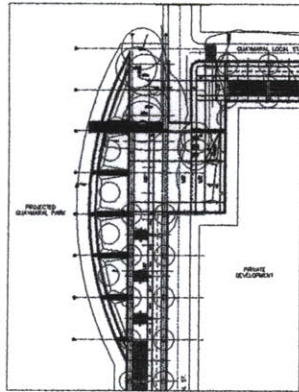
Master Plan. Fig. 69



## ALAMEDA BOGOTA RIVER

Lenght : 9.5 Km.  
(5.9 Miles)  
Width : 9.4 - 14.8 Mt.  
(30.8 - 48.5 Feet)

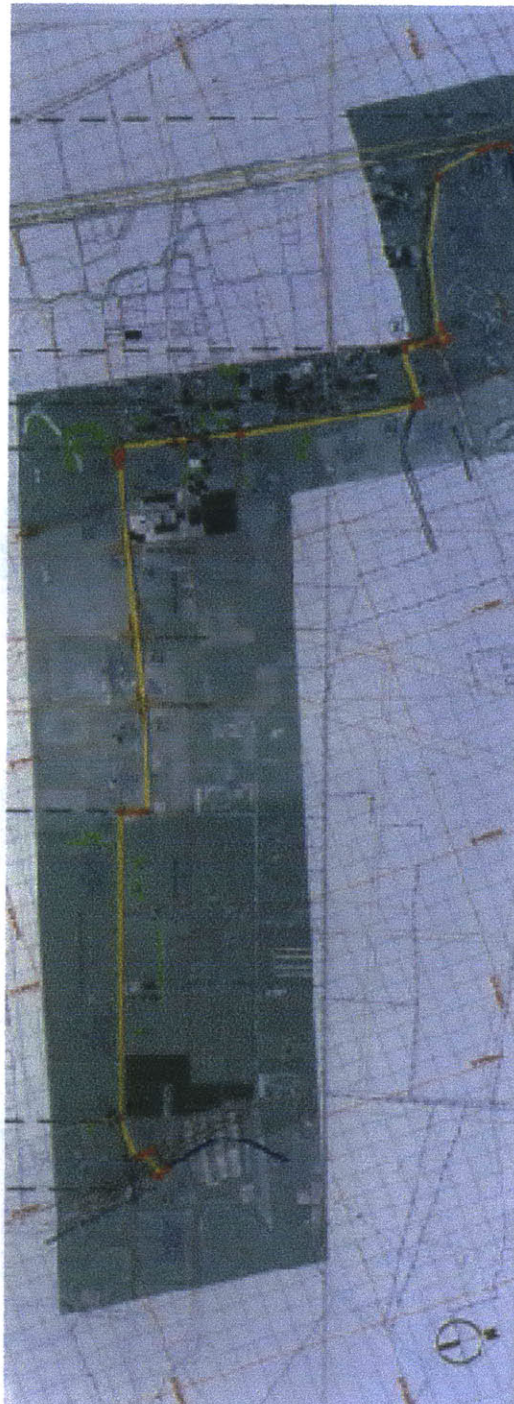




Alameda Plaza



Alameda Corridor

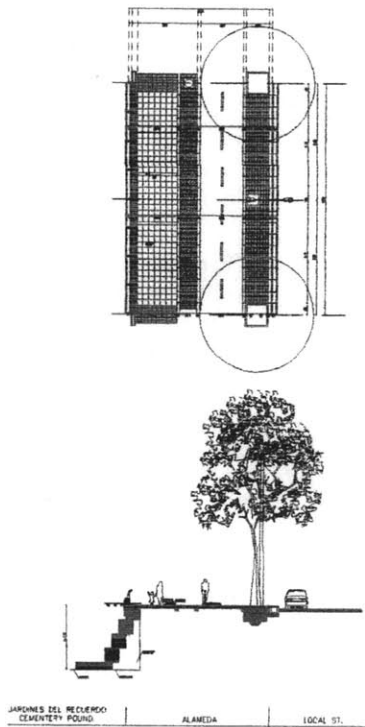
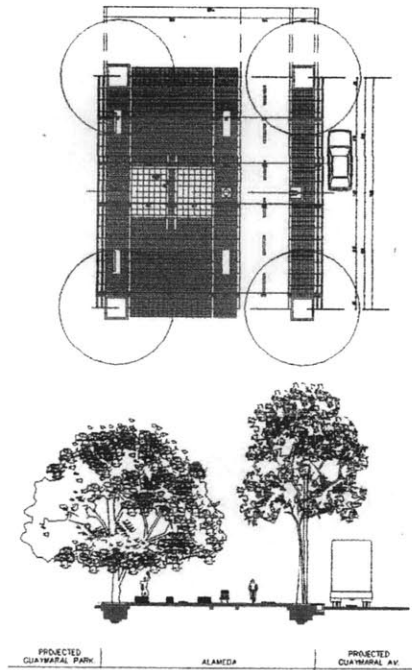


0  
500  
1 Km.

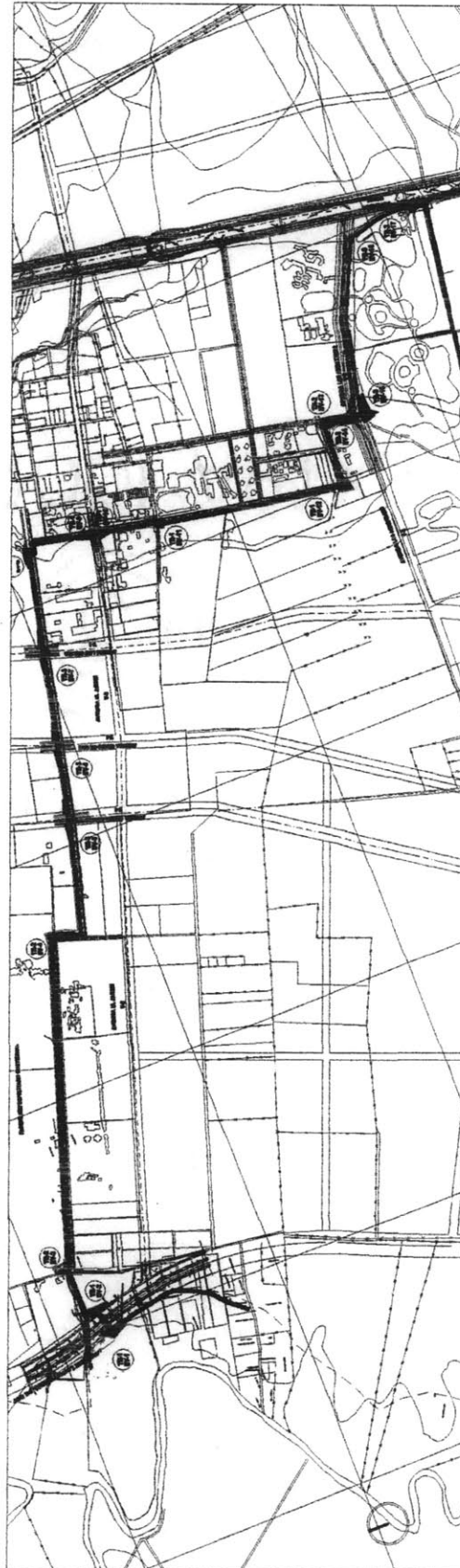
# ALAMEDA GUAYMARAL

Length : 7 Km.  
(4.35 Miles)  
Width : 10 - 15 Mt.  
(32.8 - 49.2 Feet)





Typical Module



Master Plan.

# ALAMEDA GUAYMARAL

Lenght : 7 Km.  
(4.35 Miles)  
Width : 10 - 15 ML.  
(32.8 - 49.2 Feet)





through farmlands in an area of great landscaping value and considered rural area along 5 km. Alameda Arrayanes meets Alameda Guaymaral at Torca wetland and goes further east through another projected metropolitan park.

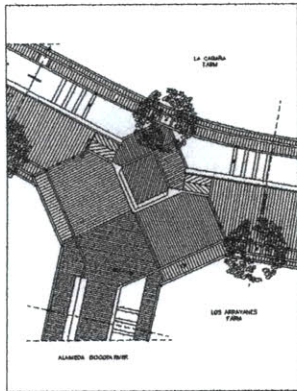
Furthermore, both Alameda Guaymaral and Arrayanes will define the borders of park cemeteries in the area. These cemeteries concentrate a great variety of activities during weekends along North Highway which results in a great congestion of people and traffic in the cemeteries and highway borders. An adequate space in which these activities can properly take place is needed, and the alamedas are certainly a solution since a lot of this activity is related to pedestrian circulation. There also related activities as flower shops and places to eat that could be well organized if a public space was provided.

Alamedas Torca and 189<sup>th</sup> St. profit from the space available now at the borders of these canals that have been recently built. While Alameda Torca is to be used for people coming all over the city, Alameda 189<sup>th</sup> St. Canal has a neighborhood scale.

Alameda Torca Canal (figs. 74, 75) is a north-south corridor of 4,2 km along the canal and will enlarge an existing linear path recently built by the City Water and Sewerage Company (EAAB) at the same time as the canal. The alameda goes through consolidated housing areas, private country clubs and learning institutions as well as farmland and land still to be developed with housing projects. Along the corridor, residential areas of different income levels have been developed in a way that can not take full advantage of the new public space. Nevertheless, future developments and the urban structure yet to be developed in certain areas will profit from a very good quality public space. The existing and projected housing projects and residential areas guarantee the use the alameda in an area that lacks public space. The alameda connects to Alameda 189 St. Canal and to Alameda Arrayanes, thus according to consultant Sokoloff<sup>47</sup> the alameda will contribute to the development of a public space structure in the area.

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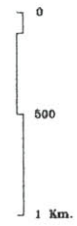
<sup>47</sup> Gregorio Sokoloff, Alameda Torca Canal Executive Report, 2001.



Alameda Plaza



Alameda Corridor

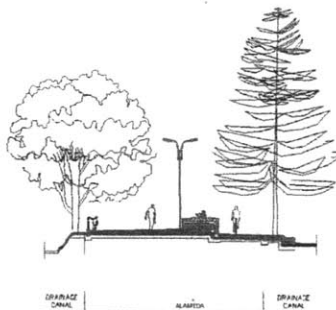
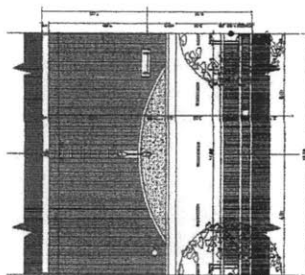
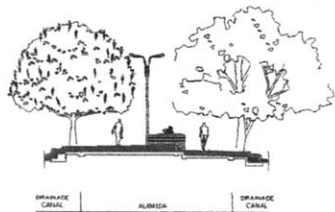
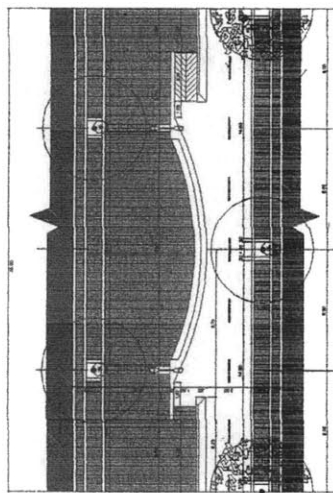


# ALAMEDA ARRAYANES

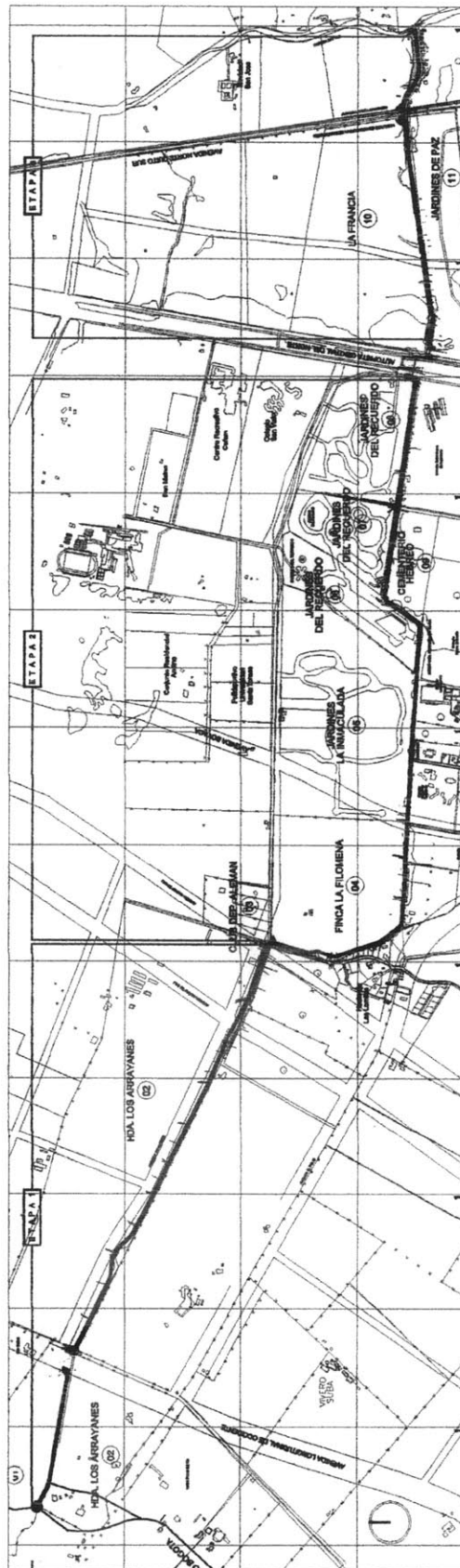
Lenght : 7 Km.  
(4.35 Miles)  
Width : 10 - 14 Mt.  
(32.8 - 45.9 Feet)



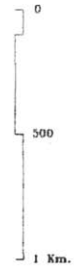
Master Plan. Fig. 72



Typical Module



Master Plan.



## ALAMEDA ARRAYANES

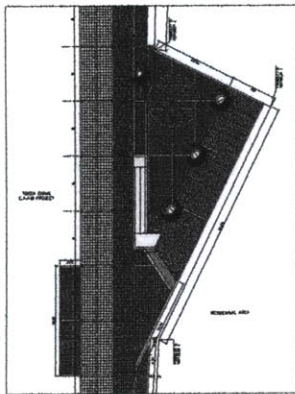
Length : 7 Km.  
(4.35 Miles)  
Width : 10 - 14 Mt.  
(32.8 - 45.9 Feet)







Torca Canal



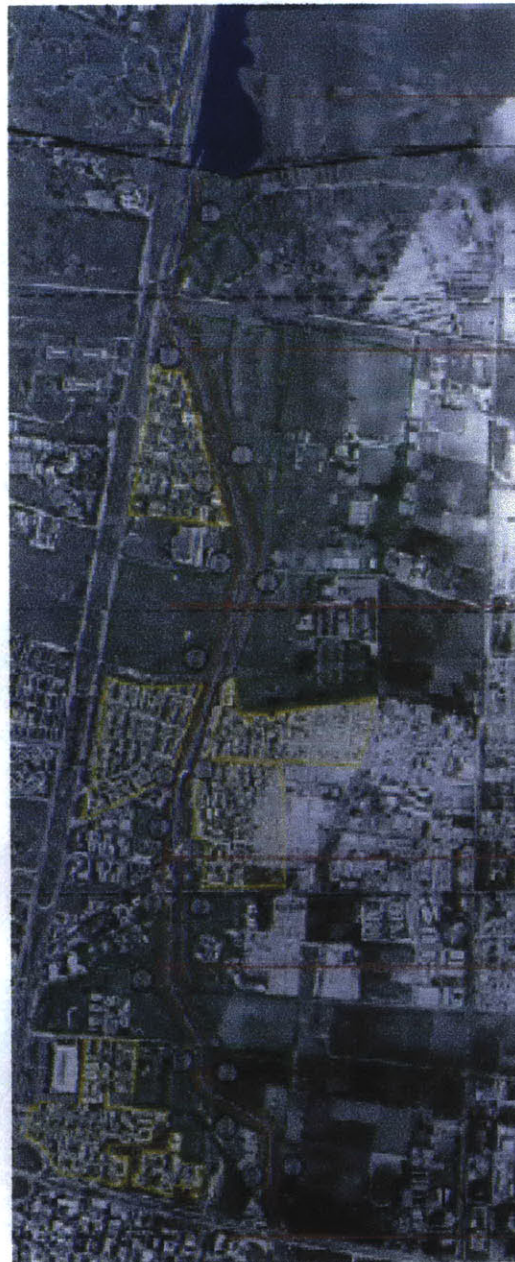
Alameda Plaza



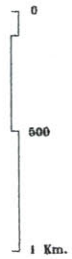
EEAB. Project.



E.E.A.B. Project.



Master Plan. Fig. 74



#### ALAMEDA TORCA CANAL

Length : 4.2 Km.  
(2.61 Miles)  
Width : 15 - 20 Mt.  
(49.2 - 65.6 Feet)





Alameda 189<sup>th</sup> St. Canal (fig. 76) runs east-west through 1,2 km along the two borders of the canal and will provide a pedestrian linear public space along the canal and will help define the border of a low income neighborhood which was developed in order to avoid the canal presence as a consequence of the poor sanitary conditions of the canal, previous to the recent intervention.

Finally, Alameda San Simon (figs. 77, 78) is a north- south 6,5 km pedestrian and bicycle path that runs parallel to the projected N.Q.S Avenue continuation in the north area. It has been designed as a wide sidewalk along this main thoroughfare's protection area. N.Q.S Avenue is one of the first north-south ring like arteries that have given the city its actual semi circular form. Alameda San Simon will guarantee a good quality public space along the avenue.

Except for Alameda San Simon and to a certain extent Alameda 189<sup>th</sup> St. Canal, alamedas in the north can be thought of as greenways. Although more modest than most greenways, these alamedas share some common traits with some of the linear structures described in the literature related to greenways<sup>48</sup>. In that sense, Alamedas Bogotá River and Arrayanes and to a certain extent Alameda Guaymaral, will contribute to define the way preservation areas can be developed and profited from. For example, Alameda Bogotá River, will be an opportunity to open for public use a traditionally privately owned land even if building or cultivating in the river bank is already banned. Since the Bogotá River is very contaminated it is also another way to draw attention to the need to clean the river, a process that has already started. Alameda Bogotá River also crosses one of the few remaining native forests in the area located in privately owned Las Mercedes farm. Furthermore, according to alameda consultant, architect De la

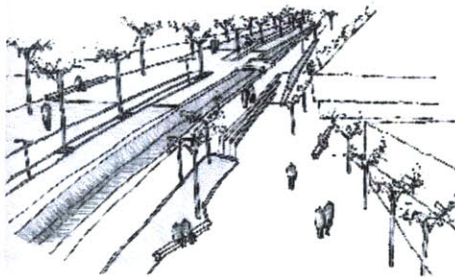
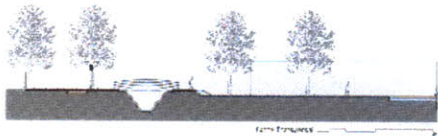
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<sup>48</sup> In Julius Gy.Fabos, *Landscape and Urban Planning* 33 (1995) p. 1-13, greenways are described as ecologically significant corridors and natural systems along rivers, coastal areas etc to maintain biodiversity and appropriate nature studies and water based recreational sites areas; trails and routes that have scenic quality as they pass through diverse and visually significant landscapes. In Charles E. Little. *Greenways for America*, Maryland, 1990, greenways are defined as a linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a river front, (...) converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road or other route.. Any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle path passage. An open space connector linking parks, nature reserves with populated areas. Locally, certain strip or linear parks designed as a parkway or greenbelt.

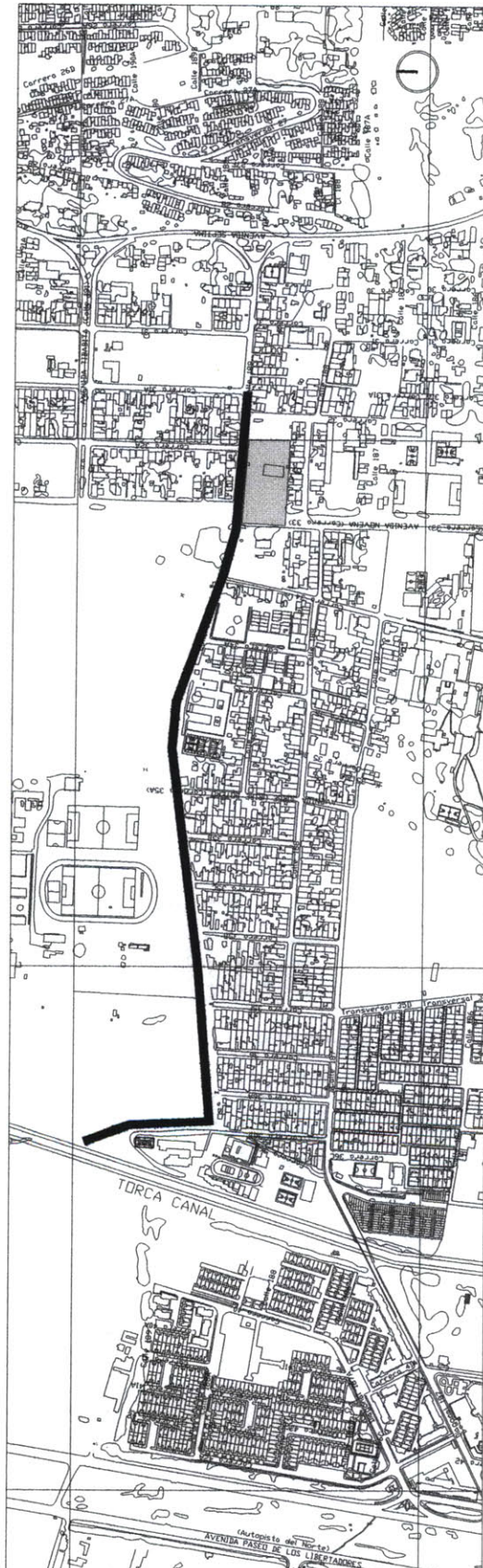




Alameda Plaza



Alameda Corridor



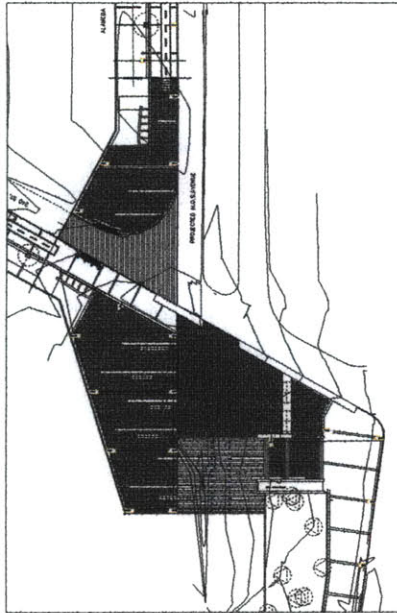
Master Plan. Fig. 76

# ALAMEDA 189 CANAL

Lenght : 1.2 Km.  
(0.74 Miles)  
Width : 5 - 15 Mt.  
(16.4 - 49.2 Feet)



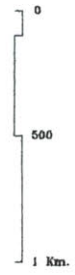
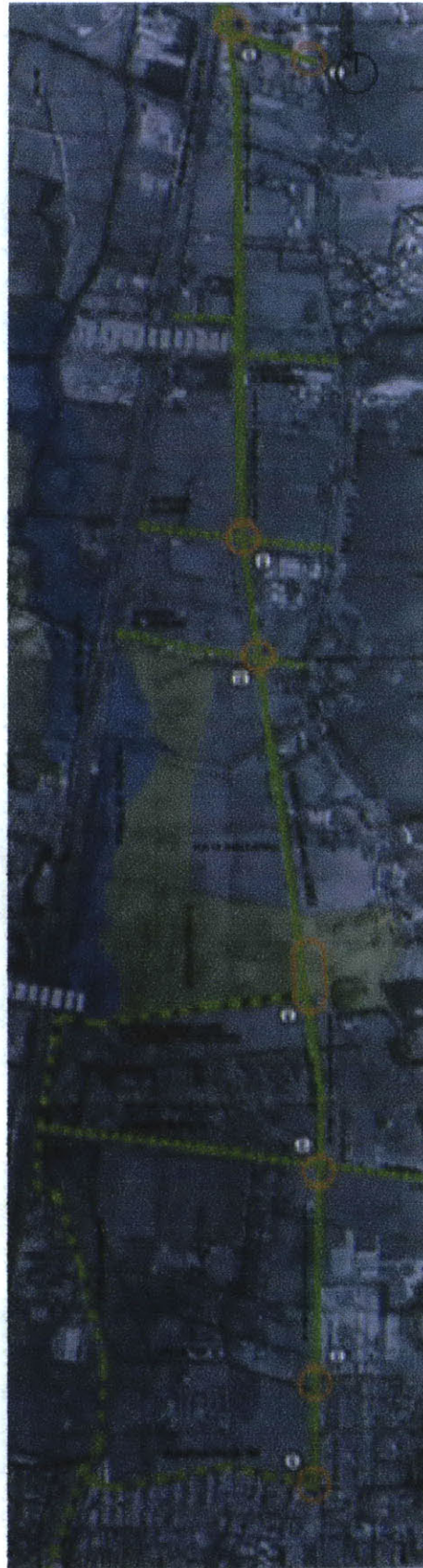




Alameda Plaza



Alameda Corridor

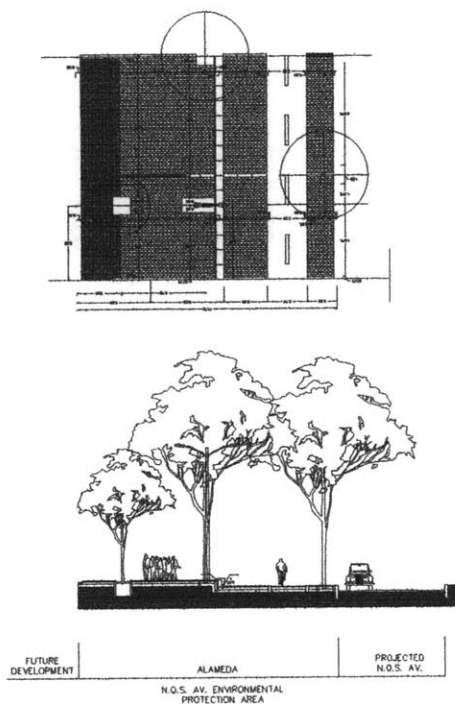
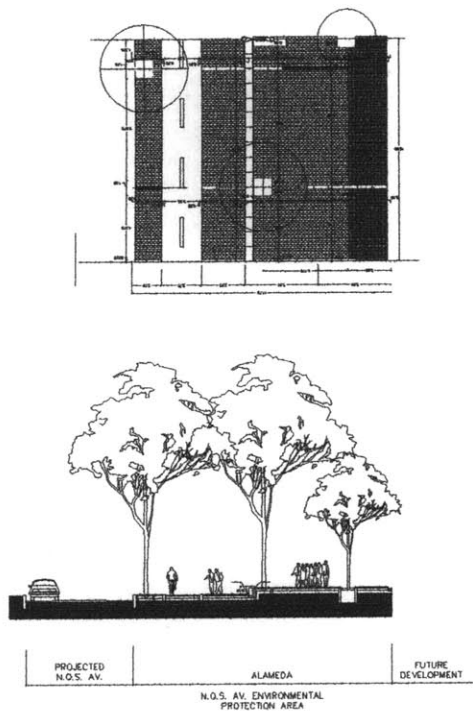


ALAMEDA  
SAN SIMON

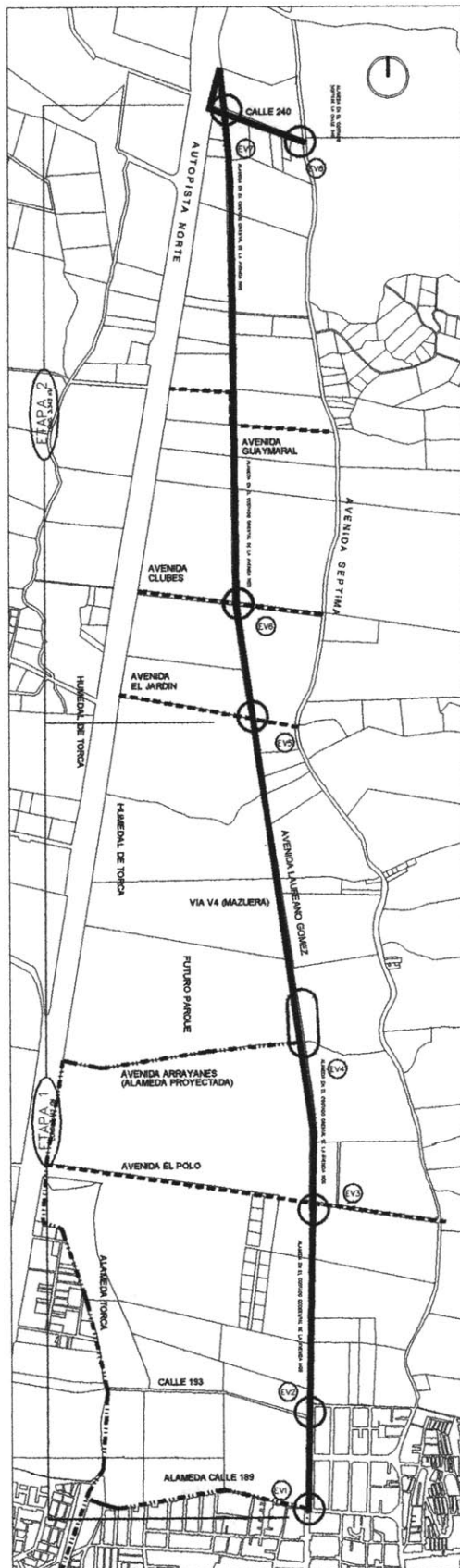
Length : 6.4 Km.  
(3.97 Miles)  
Width : 10 Mt.  
(32.8 Feet)



Master Plan. Fig. 77



Typical Module



## ALAMEDA SAN SIMON

Length : 6.4 Km.  
(3.97 Miles)  
Width : 10 Mt.  
(32.8 Feet)



Master Plan. Fig. 78



Carrera<sup>49</sup> land acquisition from the 36 owners along the corridor may well be a solution for this non-productive but tax generating land.

Furthermore, Bogotá has a great number of canals that are the result of the geographical conditions of the city. In the urban development of the city the recreational and environmentally qualities these open spaces has not been sufficiently profited from. On the contrary, usually residential or urban facilities next to canals are designed so the relation to the canal, be it visual or physical is prevented. This is recently changing and alamedas have been designed to define the canals' public space.

Moreover, the initial intention of connecting the Bogotá River to the mountains through alamedas seems possible in the north area. Alamedas can contribute to build a pedestrian and bicycle circulation network with a recreational emphasis available to people from the area as well as from other parts of the city. Besides, since the area is still to be developed, the greenway character of these alamedas can be enhanced and protected.

## 5.2. Alamedas in the central area:

Alamedas in this area are: Alameda Pepe Sierra, Alameda N.Q.S, Alameda Jaboque and Alameda Pedro Leon Trabuchy.

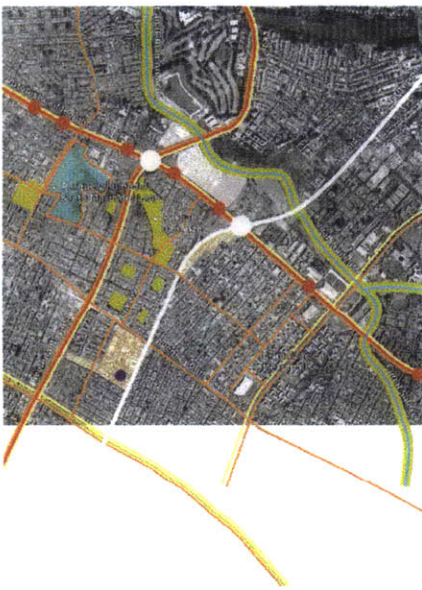


Fig.79 Ferias - Boyacá structuring operation, POT, DAPD, Bogotá 2000.

Central area is defined in POT as the expanded center meaning the expansion of the traditional city. It is the more consolidated area in the city and it has a combination of residential, industrial and commercial activity as well as several residential, industrial and business districts and urban facilities of all kinds. Some of the largest metropolitan parks are located in the expanded center. The POT's intention is to reinforce the development of central activity districts.

Alamedas in this area are contained in several of the structuring operations proposed by the POT<sup>50</sup> (fig. 79), together with other pedestrian areas within the street network. Some of these alamedas connect to a bigger public space development such as the one proposed for the Cordoba, Juan Amarillo, Jaboque wetland

<sup>49</sup> Fernando De la Carrera, Alameda Bogotá River, Executive Report, Bogotá, March 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Cuadernos del POT. Op. cit. (p18 -21, 36-37, 56-57)

system<sup>51</sup>. Alamedas in this part of the city have been conceived as a public space network in an already built and consolidated city, thus in most cases profit from existing spaces along the streets.

Two of the proposed alamedas, Pepe Sierra and Pedro Leon Trabuchy take advantage of the the space in the middle of these dual carriageways. Pepe Sierra Alameda (fig. 80) is a 2km “rambla” along Pepe Sierra Avenue a major east- west artery with commercial activity. The alameda will improve the quality of the public space along the avenue and at the same time will connect existing green spaces located in the adjacent residential areas. Alameda Pedro Leon Trabuchy (fig. 81) has also been designed as a 1,6 km “rambla” connecting two major east west arteries, in an area with industrial activity and metropolitan urban facilities such as the National University and the most important industrial exhibition’s facility in the city.

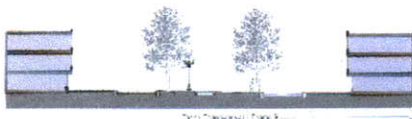
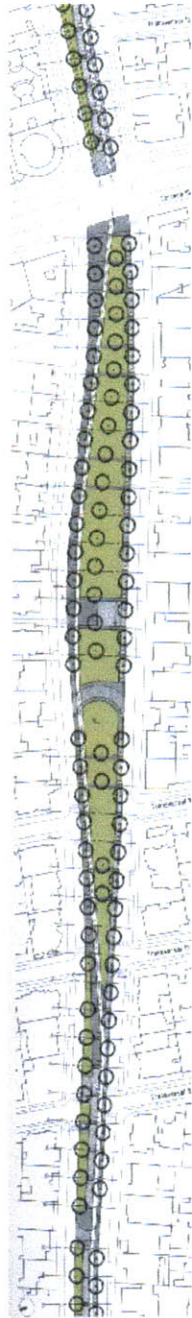
Alameda N.Q.S (fig. 82) is a 8,3 km sidewalk along the east side of one of the ring like arteries that give the city its semicircular form. The encounter of the grid pattern and the circular pattern along some parts of N.Q.S Avenue produces a conflicting border and a series of remnant spaces. This was used as an opportunity to improve the quality of these places and to define the thoroughfare’s border with a good sidewalk and a series of plazas much in the way Alameda San Simon will do further north. In the case of alameda N.Q.S a bicycle path has been built instead of the alameda that was planned.

Alameda Jaboque (fig. 83, 84) is a 6,5 km corridor along projected Salitre Avenue. The alameda will connect metropolitan Simon Bolivar Park and Jaboque wetland two major recreational and environmental places in the city. It also links small and scattered green spaces along the corridor. The urban design project runs through a dense middle income mostly residential area that was developed through a consecutive addition of small planned developments and neighborhoods without a proper open space allocation and distribution. Alameda ends in Jaboque wetland where it connects to the landscape and recuperation project of Cordoba Juan Amarillo and Jaboque Systems<sup>52</sup>. Therefore alameda

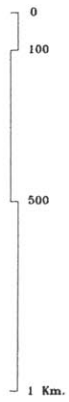
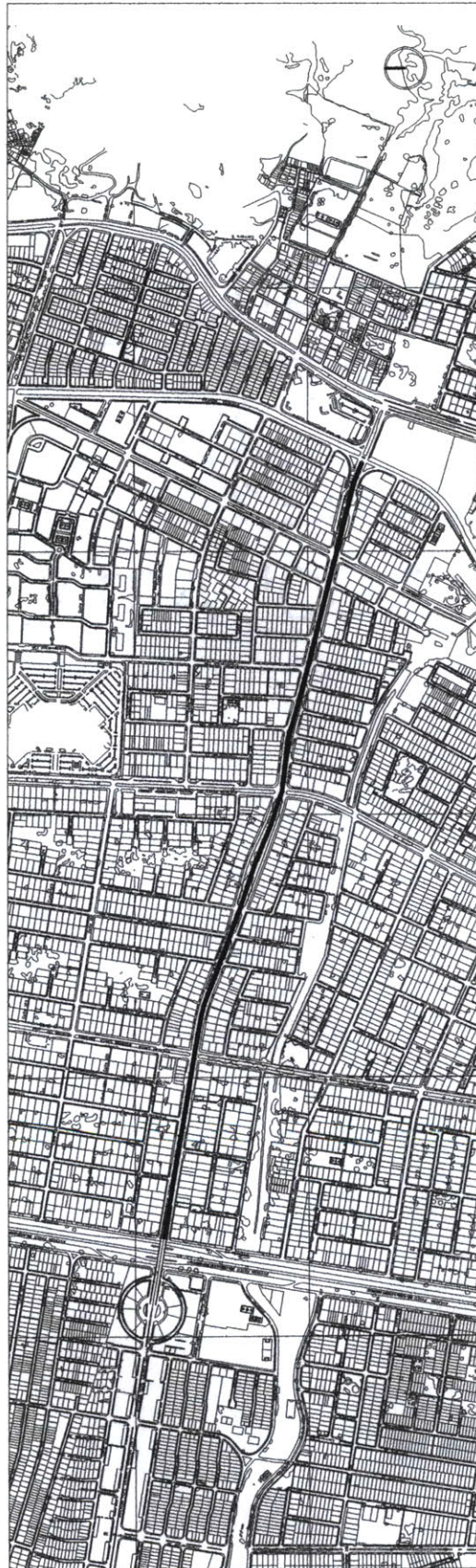
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<sup>51</sup> GX Samper, E. Samper M. architects and Gomez, Cajiao Associates landscape and bicycle path recuperation and protection project for Cordoba, Juan Amarillo, Jaboque wetland system, EAAB, 1999.





Alameda Corridor



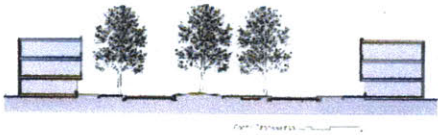
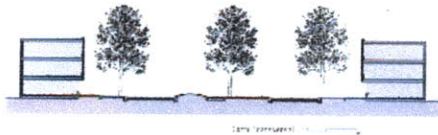
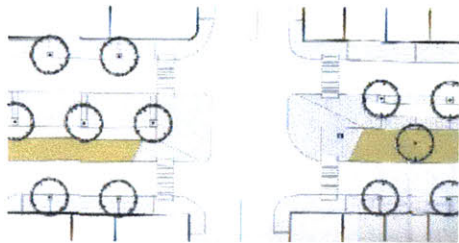
# ALAMEDA PEPE SIERRA

Lenght : 2 Km.  
(1.24 Miles)  
Width : 15 - 30 Mt.  
(49.2 - 98.4 Feet)



Master Plan. Fig. 80





Alameda Corridor



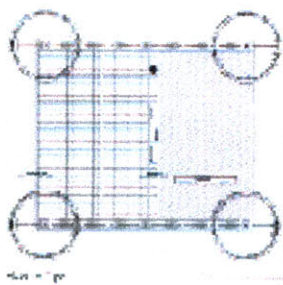
Master Plan. Fig. 81

**ALAMEDA  
PEDRO LEON  
TRABUCHY**

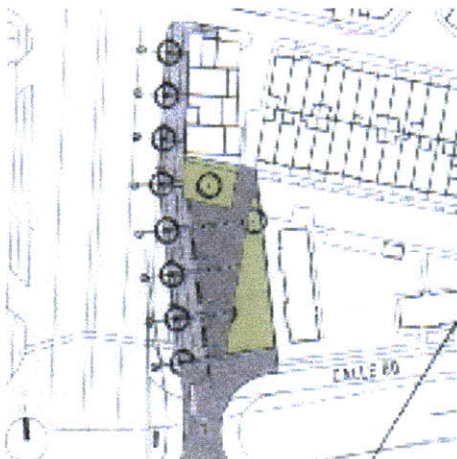
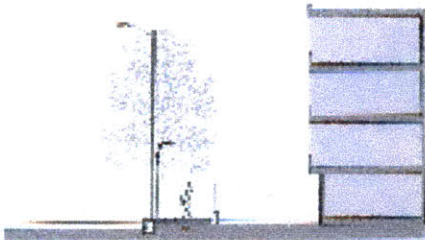
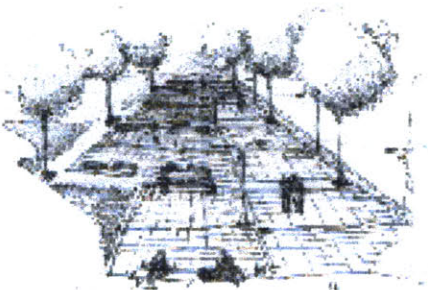
Length : 1.2 Km.  
(0.74 Miles)  
Width : 10 Mt.  
(32.8 Feet)







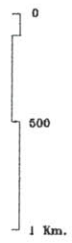
Typical Module



Alameda Corridor



Master Plan, Fig. 82

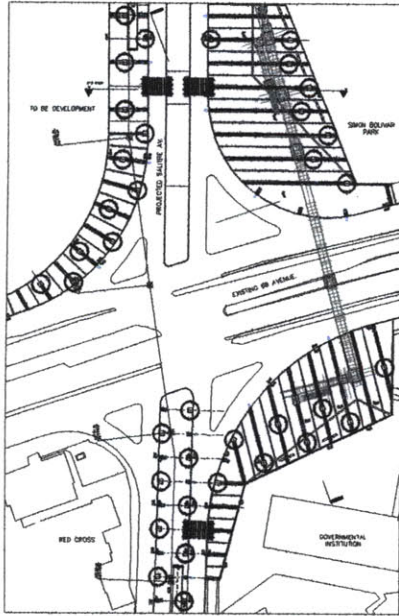


# ALAMEDA N.Q.S. AVENUE

Lenght : 8.3 Km.  
(5.15 Miles)  
Width : 1.5 - 8 Mt.  
(4.9 - 26.24 Feet)



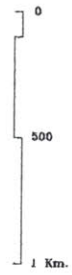




Alameda Plaza



Alameda Corridor



**ALAMEDA  
SIMON BOLIVAR  
JABOQUE**

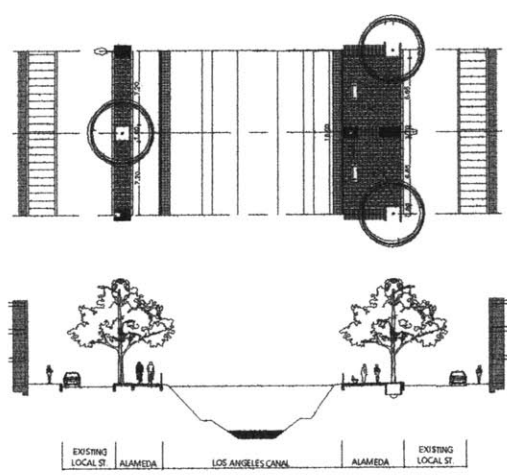
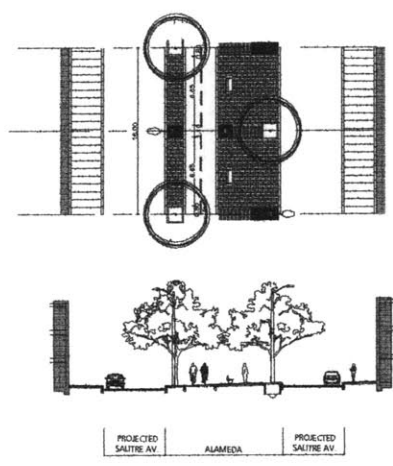
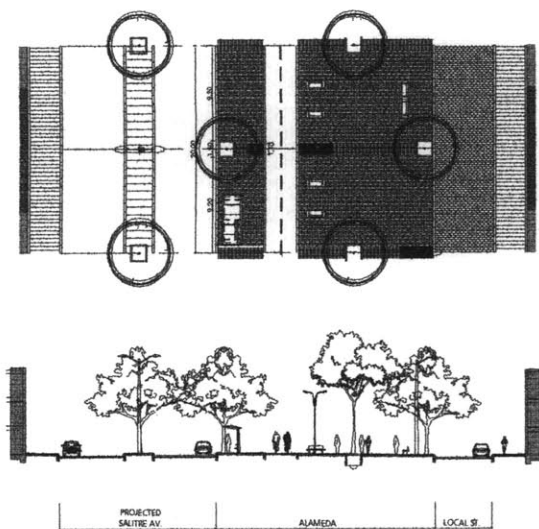
Length : 6.5 Km.  
(4.03 Miles)

Width : 15 - 20 Mt.  
(36.8 - 65.6 Feet)

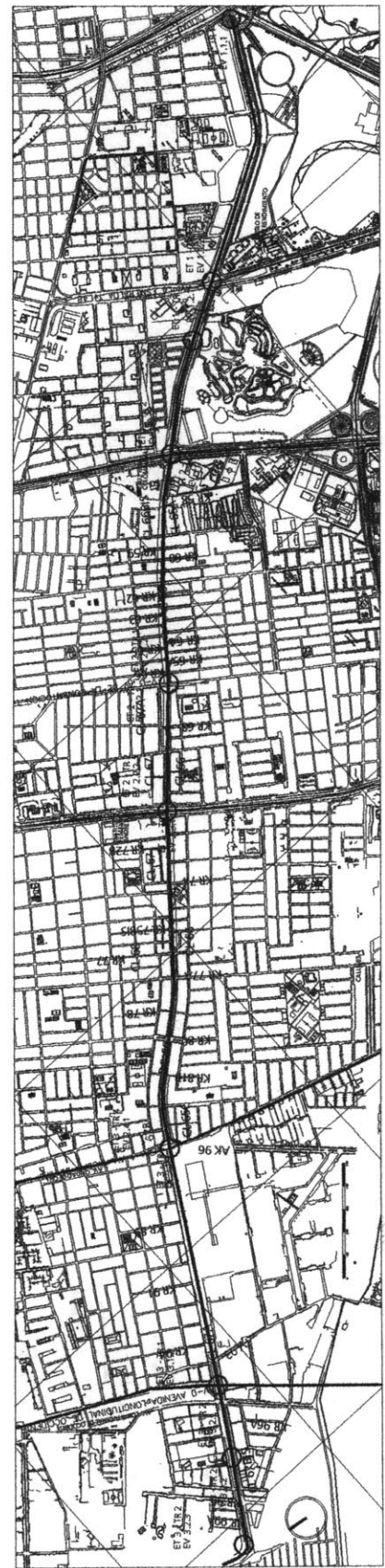


Master Plan. Fig. 83





Typical Module



ALAMEDA  
SIMON BOLIVAR  
JABOQUE

Length : 6.5 Km.  
(4.03 Miles)

Width : 15 - 20 Mt.  
(36.8 - 65.6 Feet)



Jaboque is also a new path in the development of an ecological structure since it connects Bogotá River wetland system to a metropolitan park in the central area.

Alamedas Pepe Sierra, Pedro Leon Trabuchy and N.Q.S. are similar proposals in the sense that their purpose is to improve the quality of existing streets. Alameda N.Q.S., proposed along this ring like artery is an example of other recent interventions along many arteries in the city that seek to recuperate public space which has been privatized by residential or commercial developments. In the central area similar interventions have been proposed in the POT's structuring operations for pedestrian circulation. What is interesting about these proposals is the intention to improve existing spaces to allow pedestrian and bicycle circulation, a procedure that can be replicated in many places in the city.

On the contrary, as an urban operation it could be argued that Alameda Jaboque has no precedent in the development of the central city. The section of projected Salitre Avenue according to the City Street Plan (Plan Vial ) had to be transformed to include the alameda. Transformation of the section consisted in a lane reduction to accommodate the alameda both as a wide sidewalk or as a "rambla" depending on the urban structure along the alameda corridor. Alameda Jaboque is a wide sidewalk along Salitre Avenue Canal in most of the avenue's design. Nevertheless in the more consolidated sector a "rambla" type alameda will run in the middle of traffic lanes. In part of this area the necessary pulling down was an opportunity to design a wide and three block long plaza which was encouraged and approved by the City Planning Department (DAPD). Next to Jaboque wetland the alameda runs along both sides of Los Angeles Canal located in the middle of a narrow local street.

Along a considerable extension of the alameda layout- 2,5 km in average -the alameda crosses a very consolidated area which means that a major pulling down is required to build the alameda and Salitre Avenue. This kind of interventions are not new in the city<sup>53</sup>. What is new in this case is that the pulling down will also include a public space. Moreover, an urban renewal project in this

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<sup>52</sup> GX Samper, E. Samper Op.Cit. EAAB, 1999.

area of the city that is being studied could profit from the new land availability as a result of the required demolition. As it will be explained in some parts of Alameda 40 Sur and Alameda Porvenir a similar operation, to include an alameda along a projected street was proposed for the west expansion area.

In any case all alamedas designs in the central area share a concern for the quality of the street space in the city. The design of streets as mere functional and technical projects has been changing recently in some of the big cities in Colombia (Medellin and Cali as well). Architects work together in teams with engineers in infrastructure projects so public space involved in the designs is also cared for. This though it may seem obvious in other latitudes is a recent practice in Colombia and corresponds to a different stage in the construction of the city. While some years ago the emphasis was on the amount of infrastructure required to cope with city needs, now the quality of the space produced is considered as important as the technical solution.

### **5.3. Alamedas in the south west area:**

Alamedas in this area are: Alameda Carmelo Canal, Alameda El Porvenir, Alameda Bosa and Alameda 40 Sur.

The west expansion area is located in between the consolidated urbanized area of the city and the east side of the Bogotá River. In general this area is characterized by fragmented neighborhoods and residential developments in various stages of consolidation. Towards the east side of the area developments are more consolidated and some metropolitan facilities are available. On the contrary, residential neighborhoods next to the Bogotá River have in most cases an informal origin. Because water supply and sewerage systems are scarcely developed, the proximity to the river results in frequent flooding during the rainy season. The area lacks a complete development of the street network, has no proper public space and practically no urban facilities. This situation is currently changing since two important public low income housing projects as well as private housing developments and some parks are being developed in the area.

Alameda El Porvenir is described in Tintal – Corabastos structuring operation<sup>54</sup> as the structuring public space of the intervention.

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<sup>53</sup> The development of Caracas Av. to the south, Carrera Decima Av., Calle 19 Av. and Calle 80 Av. are examples of major pulling down.



Alameda El Provenir is the spine of a public space system consisting in a series of alamedas and pedestrian paths along drainage canals. Alameda El Porvenir is the most ambitious of all alamedas proposed and will be described in depth further on.

Alameda Carmelo Canal (fig. 85) was the first alameda to be proposed. The 1,2 km east-west alameda, starting from ALO and 72 Street intersection to Jaboque wetland<sup>55</sup>, was designed in coordination to Bogotá's Water and Sewerage Company (EAAB) canalization works on Carmelo Canal. The alameda will help define a projected residential project's open space as well as Alamo's park border. As in the other alamedas related to canals, Alameda Carmelo Canal takes advantage of this kind of situation to encourage the development of a public linear space.

Alameda Bosa (figs. 86, 87)-called before Alameda Franja Seca-, the first alameda that was built, is a 2 km east - west alameda along the two borders of Canal Tintal III. It was done simultaneously with the canalization works as well. It provides at the same time a solution for rain water drainage and a good quality public space. One of the canal borders is adjacent to a private low income housing project. The project's urban design took into account the presence of the alameda. Thus the required green areas are in contact to one of the alameda borders which results in an even better public space for both the housing project and for the alameda. On the other side the alameda defines an informal settlement border. The difference in level between the canal and the houses is solved with a system of stairs and slopes which provides the alameda with a varied and interesting section. Alameda Bosa grants the place with an unquestionable good quality and needed public space. It gives order to the area and when visiting the alameda in different occasions it was always being used as a pedestrian street, as a place where children play and as a leisure promenade (fig. 88). Alameda Bosa connects to Alameda El Porvenir.



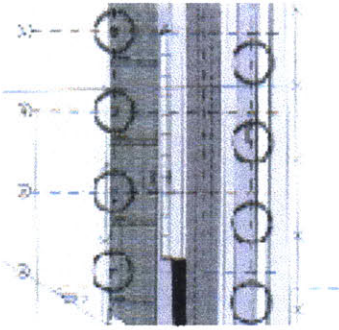
Fig. 87 - 88 Alameda Bosa, Bogotá, 2002.

Alameda 40 Sur (figs.89, 90) is an east - west 4.2 km alameda that starts at Kennedy neighborhood one of the consolidated

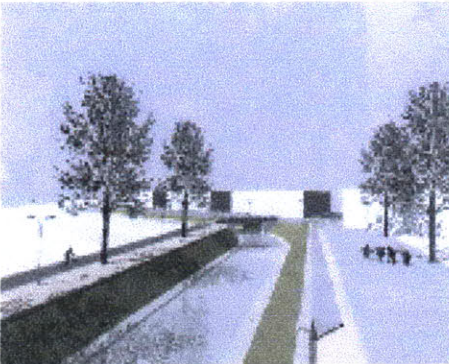
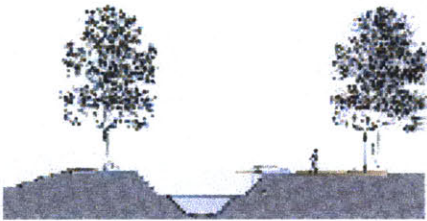
<sup>54</sup> Cuadernos del POT. Op. cit. (p. 40-43)

<sup>55</sup> It will also connect to landscape and bicycle path recuperation and protection project for Córdoba, Juan Amarillo, Jaboque wetland system project designed by GX Samper, E. Samper M. architects and Gomez, Cajiao Associates.

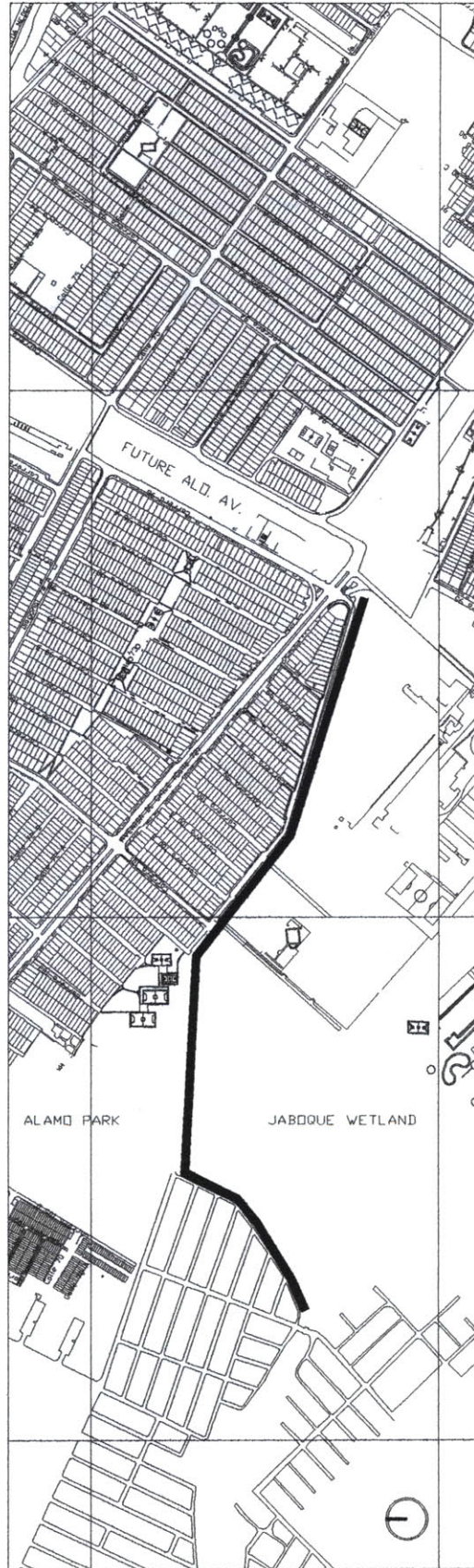




Typical Module



Alameda Corridor



Master Plan. Fig. 85

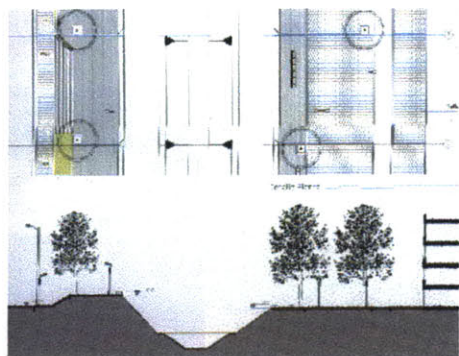
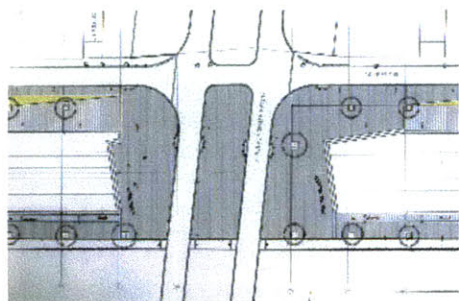
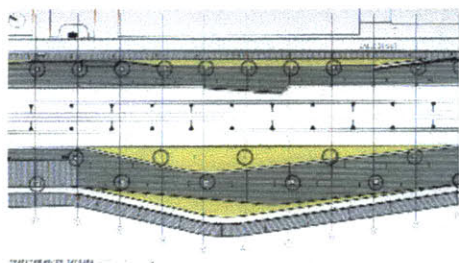


# ALAMEDA CARMELO CANAL

Lenght : 1.2 Km.  
(0.74 Miles)  
Width : 15 - 20 Mt.  
(49.2 - 65.6 Feet)



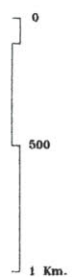




Alameda Corridor



Master Plan. Fig. 86



### ALAMEDA FRANJA SECA

Length : 2 Km.  
(1.24 Miles)  
Width : 10 - 30 Mt.  
(32.8 - 98.4 Feet)  
( Each side of the canal )





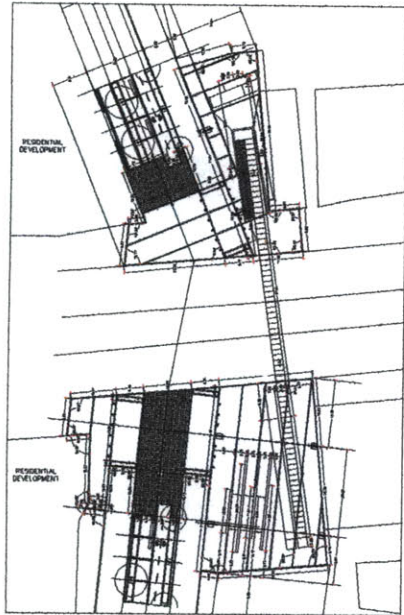
districts in the west area along the space left to build Avenue 40 Sur. The alameda crosses two projected parks, La Vaca wetland and several informal settlements. The alameda's urban design was done in coordination with the City Water and Sewerage Company (EAAB) in a effort to complete public service infrastructure. The alameda will prevent further invasion of La Vaca wetland and will provide the existing corridor, now a no man's land, with a good quality public space. Alameda 40 Sur will also connect one of Kennedy's main educational facilities to recently projected parks; it will also define the main commercial strip of Patio Bonito's neighborhood, an existing informal settlement along the corridor and it will work as a pedestrian and bicycle street to reach public transportation. Alameda 40 Sur will also connect to Alameda El Porvenir.

Alamedas in the south west expansion have been designed in many cases as pedestrian and bicycle paths along the drainage canal system borders, to provide public space in areas that due to informal growth lack public space. Thus, alamedas along the canal system will solve two problems with one intervention : the constant flooding and public space provision. Alameda El Porvenir links some of these interventions being a north south corridor.

#### **5.4. Alamedas in the south area:**

Alamedas in this area are: Alameda Usme, and Alameda Tunjuelo River.

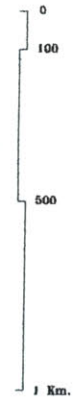
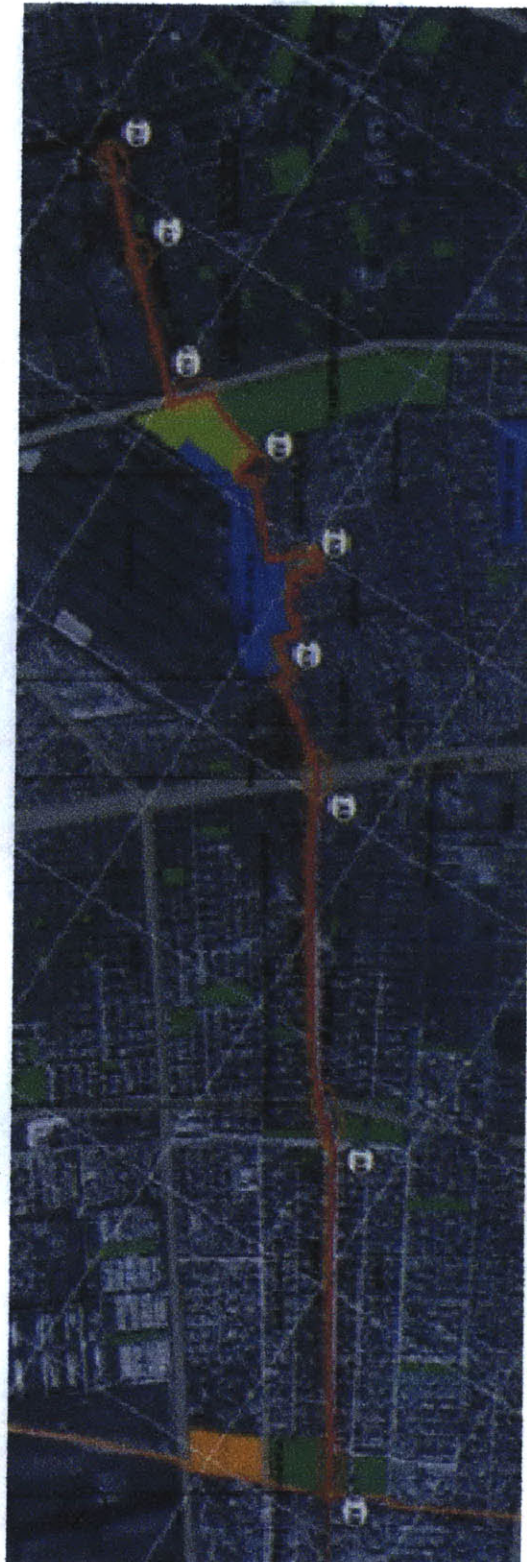
Located in the south eastern end of the city, the south expansion area is characterized for having two mountain range systems, the eastern mountains that cross the whole city north to south and the south mountains. In between these two ranges the Tunjuelo River acts as a natural barrier and adds to the poor connection of this area to the rest of the city. Because of the mountains, the area has places of great landscape and environmental value spoiled by mineral extraction activities and quarries along the Tunjuelo River. The zone has the largest informal settlement in Bogotá, Ciudad Bolivar, an area whose development lacks any kind of urban planning. In the south eastern end of the area and at the end of one of the main streets that connects the area to the rest of the city, Usme village is to be found. In the fifties, Usme was incorporated to the city together with other



Alameda Plaza



Alameda Corridor

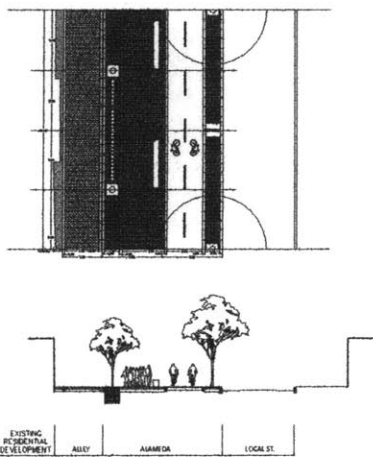
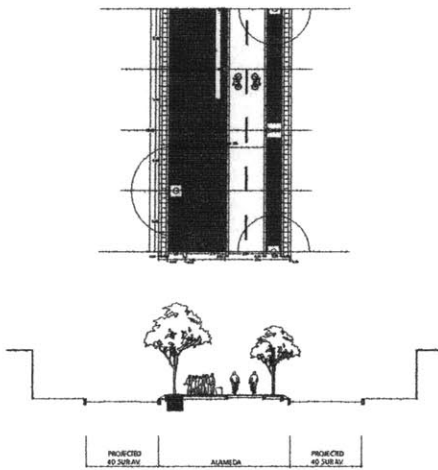
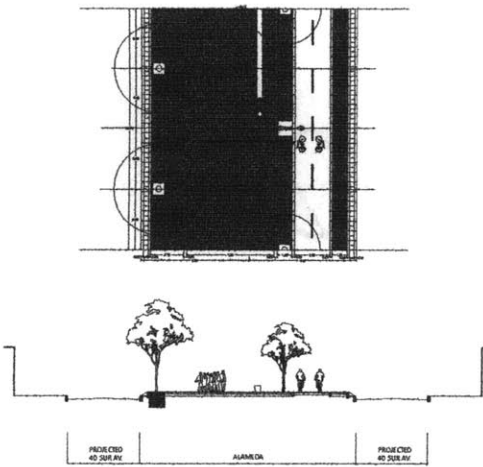


# ALAMEDA 40 SUR STREET.

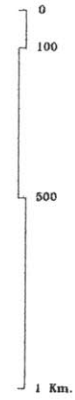
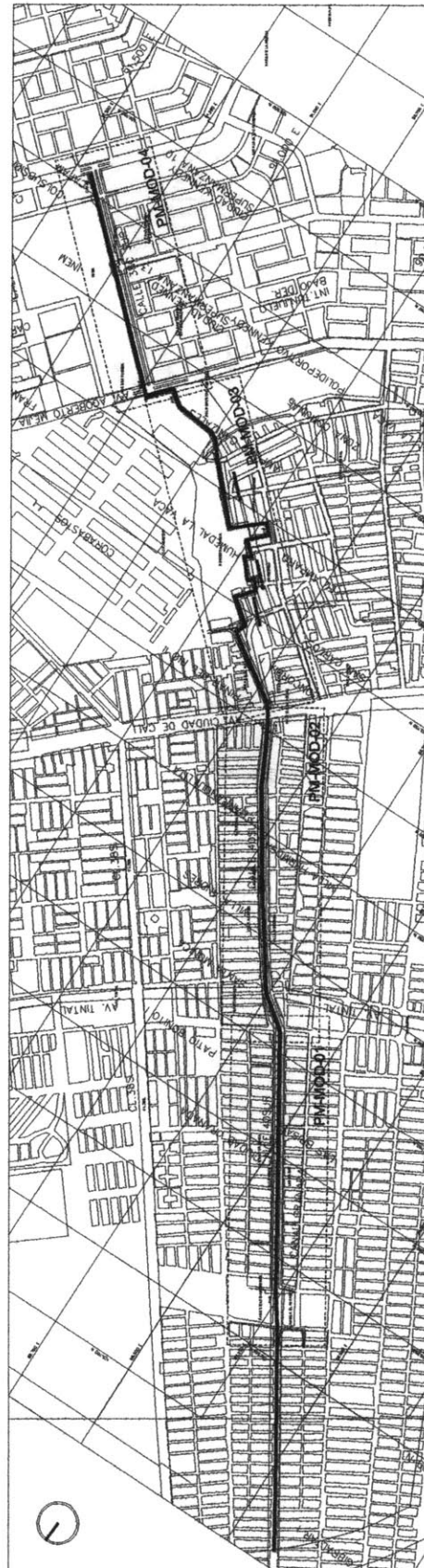
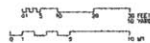
Lenght : 4.2 Km.  
(2.6 Miles)  
Width : 9 - 15 Mt.  
(29.5 - 49.2 Feet)



Master Plan. Fig. 89



Typical Module



# ALAMEDA 40 SUR STREET.

Length : 4.2 Km.  
(2.6 Miles)  
Width : 9 - 15 Mt.  
(29.5 - 49.2 Feet)



Master Plan. Fig. 90



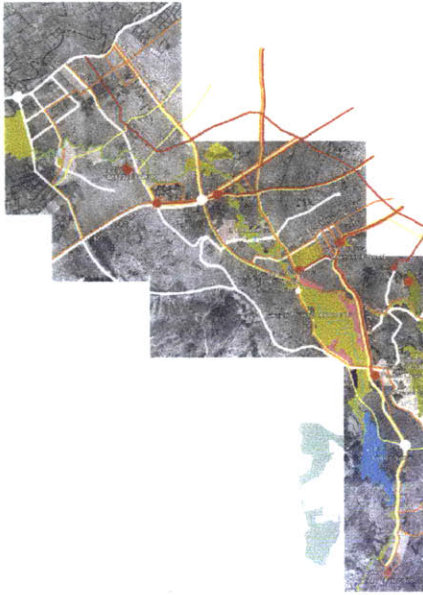


Fig.91 Tunjuelo River structuring operation, POT, DAPD, Bogotá 2000.



Fig.92 Tunjuelo River Park Master Plan, Bogotá.



Fig. 94 - 95 Usme, Bogotá.

villages next to the urban area. Usme is small grid plan village located in an impressive setting on the east mountains.

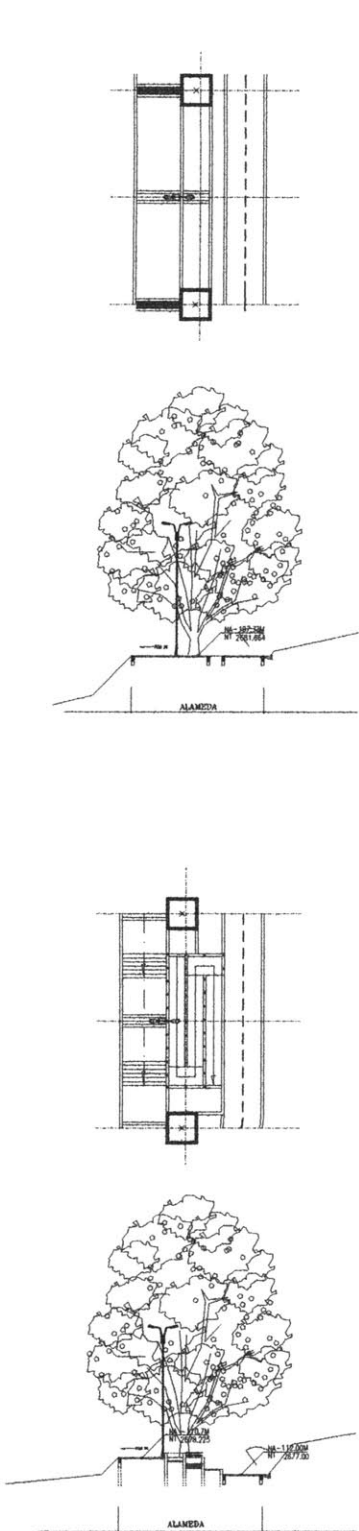
Tunjuelo River is the main structuring operation in the south area of the city<sup>56</sup> (fig. 91), one of the most comprehensive and extended operations projected in the city, it stretches from the east to west area and it is divided in three sub –areas. Tunjuelo River is the main axis of the intervention that seeks to restructure the area as a whole through the development of public service infrastructure and integral plans for marginal zones. The public space intervention consists in the development of the intermediate and local street system and a green space structure along the river that connects existing and projected parks as well as a system of pedestrian paths. Alamedas will serve as a complement to the green space structure.

In fact Alameda Tunjuelo River (fig. 92) was proposed as a bicycle and pedestrian path along one of the Tunjuelo River to connect two parks and as one of the elements of a Master Plan for the development and improvement of the river's bank. La Red de Alamedas had not been developed yet. Thus alameda Tunjuelo River was later incorporated to La Red de Alamedas. Further development of the alameda along the Tunjuelo River has been proposed but no designs have been developed yet.

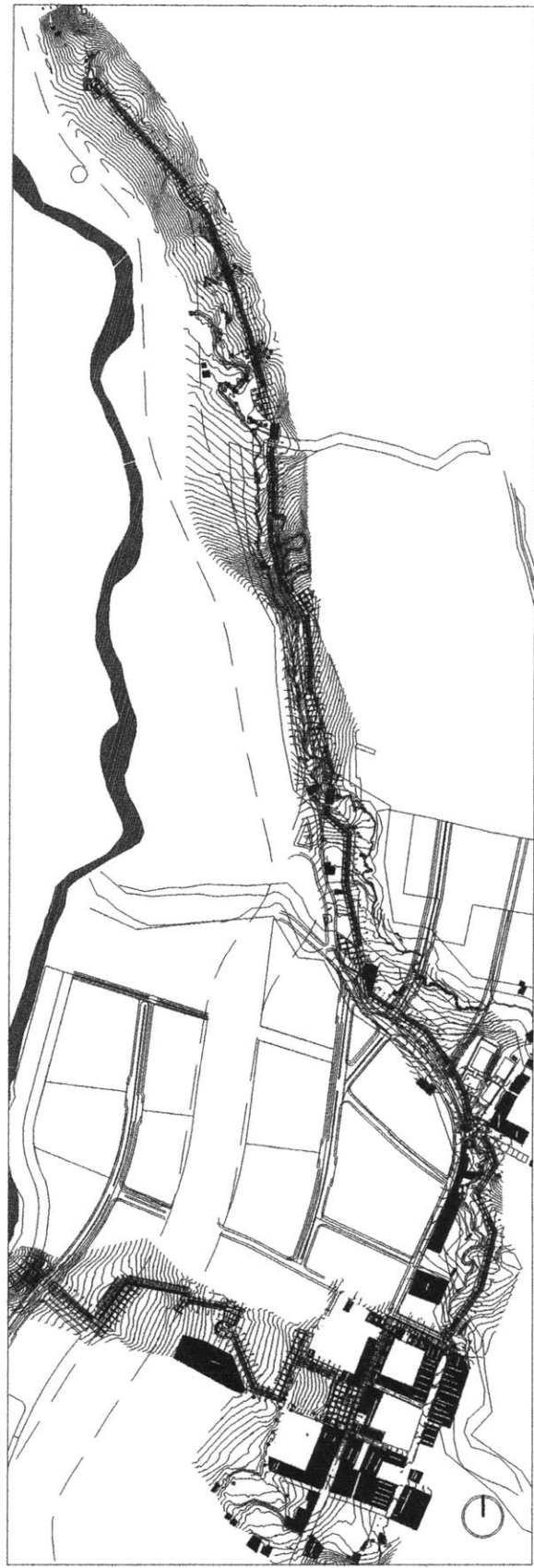
Located at the end of a highly built and dense urban area, the 3 km Alameda Usme (fig. 93), starts at the beginning of Usme's rural area and runs parallel to existing streams in a steep zone up to Usme's and goes through the village and ends next to Tunjuelito River. In this area a public low income housing is being designed<sup>57</sup>. Alameda Usme's was proposed following the tradition of Usme's inhabitants to use the corridor located in the outskirts of the urban settlement as a place for leisure. The alameda's design sought to profit from the rich natural environment. In Usme's urban settlement the alameda is part of the street system and its urban design proposed a regularization of the village streets to allow automobile and pedestrian circulation. Redesign of Usme's traditional plaza, a balcony to Tunjuelito Valley in the square's west side, was also considered in the project (figs. 94, 95).

<sup>56</sup> Cuadernos del POT. Op. cit. (p. 48-51)

<sup>57</sup> Metrovivienda Ciudadela de Usme Fase I Public Housing Project developed during Peñalosa's administration and continued in Mocks administration.



Typical Module



ALAMEDA  
USME

Length : 3 Km.  
(1.86 Miles)  
Width : 10 - 15 Mt.  
(32.8 - 49.2 Feet)



Master Plan. Fig. 93



The alameda's urban design was used an opportunity to make a deep revision of the urban structure that was being proposed for the area. Caracas Avenue, the main artery that connects Usme to Bogotá, was redesigned in order to maintain the course of two rivers which were not channeled as it was initially planned. The Avenue's new layout improves the new housing project's relation to public transportation and allows the alameda to become a new and independent circulation and recreational path.

In the same way, the proposed public low income housing project's urban design was reviewed to incorporate the alameda along the required green areas. The result is an urban plan in which the alameda takes advantage of the existing natural conditions and changes its character when it reaches the traditional settlement and becomes part of the public space system of the projected housing projects. Various city offices involved in the urban plan for the area agreed successfully on Usme's urban plan revision proposed by the consultant in charge of the Alameda's urban design<sup>58</sup>.

Besides, two branches that originate at Usme Alameda reach the mountain, alamedas Parque Aleman and Alameda Tanque el Dorado. These branches have not been designed yet. Alameda Usme will connect to an alameda proposed around metropolitan Entrenubes Park which is the center of the structuring operation of the same name<sup>59</sup>.

Except for Alameda Usme, alamedas in the south expansion area need further development since at the moment they are just proposals. Nevertheless it could be said that they may have two distinct characters at the moment. Some of the alamedas have been planned as greenways and have an ecological character. This is true in part with some parts of Alameda Usme and the two projected branches. Usme alameda could be even considered to have a heritage interest since Usme is still a traditional village with unique conditions. Alameda Tunjuelo is a recreational path along a projected park. In this sense its role is subordinated to the development of the park structure. The pedestrian circulation system proposed in Tunjuelo River Master Plan still to be developed, may help to relate the alameda to a larger network of pedestrian circulation.

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<sup>58</sup> This was confirmed by architect Jacques Mosseri, Usme Alameda consultant.

<sup>59</sup> Cuadernos del POT. Op. cit. (p. 52-53)



## 5.5 ALAMEDAS CLASSIFICATION MATRIX



## 5,5 Alamedas classification matrix:

### ALAMEDAS THAT SHARE SOME FEATURES WITH GREENWAYS

Alameda	Location	Dimensions	Type / character	Use	Corridor /Design objectives/urban relations	Design and developemnt	Status
Rio Bogota	North	9,5 km L 9-11 m W	suburban ecological	recreational	<p>North -south corridor along Bogotá River, from the intersection with alameda Guaymaral through wetlands and native forests, to Conejera wetland.</p> <p>Natural conditions are profited from to allow a rich variety of situations along the corridor. Opens for public use areas which are normally private.</p> <p>Connects natural systems and Bogotá River area to the eastern mountains through alamedas Guaymaral and Arrayanes.</p>	The corridor was defined by T.E.P. Design, technical studies and coordination with city plans and institutions was done by consultant: architect, Fernando de la Carrera.	Not built
Arrayanes	North	7 km L 10-15m W	suburban Urban facility border Park border ecological	recreational circulation.	<p>East- west corridor from Alameda Rio Bogota, through Los Arrayanes farm and the north border of Los Arrayanes country club and the south edge of a park cemetery. Crosses North Highway and arrives to Carrera Septima through the north edge of another park cemetery and a projected park.</p> <p>Connects Alameda Bogota River to Carrera Septima one of the main south north streets in the city which has a relative recreational activity in this part of the city. Connects educational institutions, private country clubs and park cemeteries.</p> <p>Connects to Alameda Guaymaral as well.</p>	The corridor was defined by T.E.P.Design, technical studies and coordination with city plans and institutions was done by consultant: architect, Nicolas Camacho.	Not built
Usme	South	3km L 10 -15 m W	suburban and urban Pedestrian street in Usme Village  Independent pathway when outside Usme village ecological	recreational circulation	<p>North- south corridor along two rivers , goes through Usme Village and reaches Tunjuelo River.</p> <p>The alameda has three distinc parts: one is a recreational path in an area to be developed, the second one regularizes the urban settlement for pedestrian circulation and the last part connects the urban area to Tunjuelo River.</p> <p>The alameda's urban design project served to rethink the urban structure of the area surrounding the village.</p>	The corridor was defined by T.E.P. Design, technical studies and coordination with city plans and institutions was done by consultant: architect Jacques Mosseri	Not built

#### ALAMEDAS ALONG URBAN PARKS

Guaymaral	North	7km L 10-15m W	suburban Runs parallel to local streets in some points  Park border Urban facility border Wetland border  ecological		East- west corridor from Bogota River along the south border of future Guaymaral metropolitan park and the north border of a park cementery to North Highway. It is also the border of Torca wetland.  Connects to alamedas Bogota River and Arrayanes. Connects a metropolitan urban park, Torca wetland and institutional facilities such as schools and a park cementery.	The corridor was defined by T.E.P.Design, technical studies and coordination with city plans and institutions was done by consultant: architect Efren Alba.	Not built
Tunjuelo River	South	Not defined	urban  Independant path  environmental	recreational	East- west corridor alongTunjuelo River Connects two metropolitan parks.  The area between Timiza and Tunal was designed as a project to recuperate Tunjuelo River banks and was later incorporated to La Red de Alamedas de Bogotá.	Developed by E.A.A.B.  A master Plan for the area has been proposed. Designs for the area between Timiza and Tunal parks were done by architect and urban	Not built

#### ALAMEDAS ALONG CANALS

Torca Canal	North	4,2 km L 20 m W.	urban  Independent path  environmental	recreational circulation	North-south corridor along Torca Canal Torca wetland and North Highway. The corridor goes through consolidated residential areas , country clubs, educational intitutions, farmlands and areas still to be developed.  Works as a linear park in a consolidated residential and and institutional area with very few public space . Learning institutions and country clubs have open space only for private use. Alameda connects to the street plan to be developed and connects with Alameda 189 St. Canal and Alameda Arrayanes. Alameda Torca Canal will help to define green areas' borders in consolidated areas.	The corridor was defined by T.E.P.Design, technical studies and coordination with city plans and institutions was done by the consultant: architect Gregorio Sokoloff.  The project is adjacent to the Water Company ( E.A.A.B) project for Torca canal	Not built
189 St. Canal	North	1,2 km L 15 m W	urban  Defines neighborhood border.  environmental	circulation recreational	East -west corridor along both sides of 189 St. Canal from N.Q.S. Av. To Alameda Torca Canal. In this area N.Q.S. Av.is still a project.  The design sought to take advantage of the recreational and landscape opportunities offered by the canal and at the same time define the north border of the Verbenal residential area a low income neighborhood which at present doesn't enjoy the benefits of being next to a canal. Connects to Alameda Torca canal.	The corridor was defined by T.E.P. in coordination with E.A.A.B. General designs have been done by T.E.P team but have no technical studies yet.	The canal is built, the alameda is not built.

Carmelo Canal	South- West	1,2 Km L 15m W	urban  Defines park border Defines neighborhood borders.  environmental	circulation recreational	<p>East- west corridor from 72St to Jaboque wetland. Runs parallel to one side or both sides of Carmelo canal recently built by E.A.A.B.</p> <p>Profits from the works done in the canal to provide a good quality public space in the area. Located in a low income housing area still to be consolidated</p> <p>The alameda will define both the existing neighborhood and future development borders.</p> <p>Will connect to linear park along the Molinos- Juan Amarillo- Jaboque canal and wetland system.</p>	The corridor was defined by T.E.P. in coordination with E.A.A.B. General designs have been done by T.E.P. Technical studies were done by IDU.	It is about to be built.
Bosa	South -West	2 km L	urban Pedestrian street  Defines neighborhood borders  environmental	circulation recreational	<p>East- west corridor from Tintal Av to ALO Av both yet to be build.</p> <p>It was done simultaneously with Tintal III Canal to provide at the same time a good quality public space and the solution to flooding problems in the area.</p> <p>Alameda connects and changes it's width when next to parks.</p> <p>The alameda helps defining an informal settlement border on one side of the canal. The alameda works as a linear public space in an area where there is no public space available. Connects neighborhoods and urban facilities. Works as a pedestrian street to reach public transportation. Connects to Alameda El Porvenir.</p>	The corridor was defined by T.E.P. in coordination with E.A.A.B. and I.D.U. The alameda designs were done by T.E.P.	Was the first alameda to be built.

#### ALAMEDAS ALONG PROJECTED STREETS THAT TRANSFORMED THE STREET SECTION

Jaboque	Central West	6, 5 Km L 11 to 21 m W	urban Wide sidewalk and rambla  Runs along canal Los Angeles. Green area border.  environmental	circulation recreational	<p>East - west corridor from metropolitan Simon Bolivar Park along future Salitre Av. to Jaboque wetland in an area in various stages of consolidation, different income levels and mixed activities.</p> <p>Profits from a street plan corridor partially built to define it's final selection in order to accommodate a continuous public space which combines wide sidewalks, linear plazas, and a rambla depending on the particular urban situations along the corridor.</p> <p>Connects a main metropolitan park in the area with Jaboque wetland, green areas belonging to residential developments, canal borders, scattered neighborhood parks and urban facilities.</p> <p>Will connect to linear park along the Molinos- Juan Amarillo- Jaboque canal and wetland system.</p>	The corridor was defined by T.E.P. Design, technical studies and coordination with city plans and institutions was done by consultant: architect Marcela Angel.	Not built.
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40 Sur	West	4,2 Km L	urban Wide sidewalk and rambla  Wetland border Urban facility border Park border  environmental	circulation recreational	East- west corridor from Kennedy neighborhood to Alameda El Porvenir along projected 40 Sur street.  In half of the layout Alameda takes advantage of the existing space left to build calle 40 Sur, a street with commercial activity. Defines La Vaca wetland and Canizares park borders. Defines and improves the space in between one of the most important schools in the Kennedy area.  Connects dense planned and informal residential areas , and urban facilities like schools and parks. Defines and improves existing open space. It's use as a connection street is guaranteed because of the density and the activity along the corridor.	The corridor was defined by T.E.P.Design, technical studies and coordination with city plans and institutions was done by the consultant: architect Juan Manuel Lopez	Not built.
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#### ALAMEDAS ALONG PROJECTED STREETS

San Simon	North	6,4 km L 10m W	urban wide sidewalk Parallel to an to an important traffic artery.	circulation recreational	North-south corridor from 189 St. to 240 St. parallel to N.Q.S one of the main south north automobile circulation axis in the city. In this area N.Q.S. is still a project.On 240 St.alameda meets North Highway.  Takes advantage of N.Q.S Av. mandatory environmental protection control in both sides of the avenue so land land acquisition is reduced to the minimum.	The corridor was defined by T.E.P.Design, technical studies and coordination with city plans and institutions was done by consultant: architect Juan Pablo Ortiz.	Not built
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#### ALAMEDAS ALONG EXISTING STREETS

Pepe Sierra	Central	2,0 km L 15 to 30m W	urban Located in the middle of an avenue		East - west corridor in the middle of an existing avenue.  Profits from the existing space in the middle of the avenue The design takes advantage from a difference in the streets level to create a protected path.  In a traditional east- west axis the alameda seeks to establish north south connections with recently renewed public space along the Molinos Canal and other public green space in the area.	The corridor was defined by T.E.P. General designs have been done by T.E.P team but have no technical studies yet.	Not built
Pedro Leon Trabuchy	Central	1,2 Km L 10 m W	urban Located in the middle of an avenue	circulation	North- south corridor in the middle of an existing avenue  The design sought to regularize the existing section of the avenue and connects two main thoroughfares in the central area.	The corridor was defined by T.E.P. General designs have been done by T.E.P team but have no technical studies yet.	Not built.

N.Q.S.	Central	8,3 km L 1,5 to 8 m W	urban Wide sidewalk Parallel to an to an important traffic artery. Circulation  Defines remnant public space	circulation recreational	South- north corridor from 26 St. to 100 St. Runs parallel to the east side of N.Q.S a major south- north and north -south artery in the city.  At the same time as defining the steet sidewalk, the intervention sought to recover the irregular and privatized public space along the thoroughfare, these urban tissue irregularities are the result of conlicting streets geometries. sidewalk and bicycle path are combined with green and hard plazas along the corridor..	The corridor was defined by T.E.P. General designs have been done by T.E.P team but had no technical studies. IDU transformed the alameda in a bicycle path.	Was built as a bicycle path
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#### ALAMEDAS WHICH HAVE SEVERAL CHARACTERS ALONG THE CORRIDOR

El Porvenir	South-west	17 km L 4- 15m W	urban  Independent pedestrian street and In the middle of avenues as a rambla  Defines borders to urban facilities and parks, green areas, and wetlands.  environmental  ecological	circulation recreation	East- west and north south corridor. Connects various districts as well as consolitated, informal and slum areas. Connects urban facilities, parks and wetlands.  It works as a pedestrian street and a linear park when related to residential areas and a circulation and recreational bicycle path when goes across farmlands.  Its is the main public space structure in the area It is intended to structure urban development and promote good quality public space in an area where it is practically inexistant.  Connects to Alameda Bosa, Alameda 40 Sur and to other alamedas which have been planned along the south west area canal system.	The corridor was defined by T.E.P. Design, technical studies and coordination with city plans and institutions was done by the consultant: architects Felipe Gonzalez-Pacheco and Juan Ignacio Munoz.	Partially built
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## 6. ALAMEDA EL PORVENIR

Alameda El Porvenir will be studied in more depth in the following chapter although it is still under construction and some parts of the alameda have not yet started to be build. An introduction on the area's development as well as the actual situation will be followed by a description of the constituting parts of the alameda to asses the role Alameda El Porvenir plays in the urban structure of the area and to describe the way in which it is starting to be used.

### **6.1 The development of the west expansion area and its present situation:**

As it has been said before, Alameda El Porvenir is located in the south west periphery of the city.

Since the eighties the city administration sought to develop low income housing projects in the area. Furthermore, in the early nineties a specific plan - Plan de Ordenamiento Fisico para el sistema hidrico y el borde occidental de Bogotá- for the area was developed<sup>60</sup> and approved by the City Planning Department (DAPD). The plan included the north and the south areas of the west border of the city. In the plan the west expansion area was thought of as the area having the most critical urban themes of the city at the moment. Some of the more relevant features of the west expansion area described in the plan were: the presence of illegal settlements with no public services nor urban facilities; the fact that it was considered the most important land reserve to build low income housing projects; the permanent flooding problems which affected 50% of the area; and the great environmental potential of the area since 2,2 ha of a total of 4,2 ha apt to be developed corresponds to wetlands and Bogotá River affluents and therefore believed to be the most important hydrological resources of the city even if at the moment all these natural elements were highly contaminated. Although the situation was described ten years ago, all these considerations are still true and applicable to the area as a whole today. Nonetheless, because of the recent interventions the area is beginning to show signs of improvement.

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<sup>60</sup> Mario A. Noriega T. Bogotá west expansion strategy. Revista Javeriana, May 1992. The plan was done by the firm Noriega, Restrepo and Associates Ltda and developed within the framework of Acuerdo 6 of 1990.



The plan sought to organize the area through a public space structure consisting in a longitudinal park along Bogotá River and an environmental network which included the wetlands and the canal systems. This public space structure would enclose the areas to be developed and would define the place where urban facilities and green areas should be located. The projected street plan was maintained in general terms but some modifications were proposed in order to define sectors that would relate to the proposed environmental network. Furthermore, the plan defined urban and suburban areas, central activity nodes and public service infrastructure development. Three scales of intervention were proposed; the neighborhood, the sector and the locality to allow further development of urban facilities according to the needs of the particular scale of intervention. In general terms the plan devised action plans to incorporate the area to the city in an orderly manner.

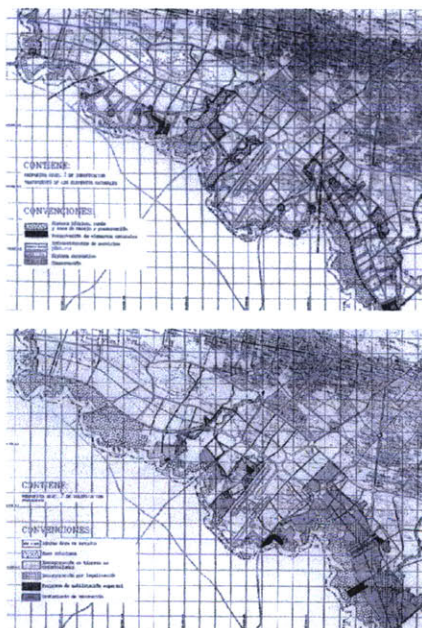


Fig.96 West expansion strategy, Bogotá, 1992.

If a relation between the plan just described and the actual development of the public space structure of the area was to be made it is possible to say that in the plan, public space is mainly developed along the canal system which correspond to Alameda Bosa and Alameda 40 Sur actual layouts. Nevertheless, Alameda El Porvenir has been proposed through the areas considered in the plan as priority actions (fig. 96)<sup>61</sup>. Besides, even if it is possible to verify that one of the linear recreational areas coincides with part of Alameda El Porvenir- because it is related to a sewage collector as it will be further explained- in general terms the plan didn't considered a linear north-south public space as Alameda El Porvenir.

The present situation of the area is the result of an agreement process at the end of the last decade in which a general improvement of the conditions of the neighborhoods was proposed and new land to be developed with low income housing projects was incorporated to the city.

Recently, new housing projects as well as urban facilities and public space provision and a general improvement of the sanitary conditions of the area have been advanced in the area recently.

<sup>61</sup> These areas are Ciudadela Tintal and Ciudadela industrial Fontibon. Op.cit. Mario Noriega, Revista Javeriana, 1992.

Some of these interventions are related to Metrovivienda, a mix enterprise in charge of land incorporation and development of low income housing projects in expansion areas, -to guarantee state control of the process<sup>62</sup>- which was established during the 1998-2001 administration. Through innovative management processes, new planning instruments as well as coordinated public interventions and further development of the street network, Metrovivienda has implemented two low income housing projects in the area, Ciudadela El Recreo -under construction at the moment- and Ciudadela Porvenir which is being designed.

Public space infrastructure has also been taken care of with the construction of Alameda Bosa, improvement of some of the drainage canals as well as the construction of new parks and urban facilities. Besides, a new metropolitan park is to be developed in what used to be a dump area. Moreover, Biblioteca El Tintal- one of the four public libraries recently built in the city- is located in the area<sup>63</sup>. The public library building used to be an obsolete waste processing plant which was renovated as a public building. Most of the recent interventions that have given the area its actual character and urban conditions were developed during the 1998-2001 administration.

The latter is supported by a structuring operation proposed by POT called Tintal -Corabastos for the south west periphery (fig. 97)<sup>64</sup>. The operation seeks to incorporate the periphery to the consolidated city in an orderly manner and to achieve sectors which have a complete urban development. Construction of low income housing, public service infrastructure completion and the provision of collective spaces are considered as the basic actions required in the area. Besides, improvement of activity and opportunity centers in Corabastos, Americas-Kennedy and Bosa and the articulation of existing and proposed urban facilities are some of the elements of the structuring operation.



Fig. 97 Tintal Corabastos structuring operation, POT, DAPD, Bogotá 2000.

The process of land incorporation for low income housing starts by improving sanitary conditions through recuperation of rivers

<sup>62</sup> Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social y de Obras Públicas para Santa Fé de Bogotá (1998 - 2001) Op.cit. (p. 38)

<sup>63</sup> Biblioteca Tintal was proposed as one of the District Library System (Sistema Distrital de Bibliotecas) during 1998-2001 administration. Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social y de Obras Públicas para Santa Fé de Bogotá, (1998 - 2001) Op.cit. (p. 39).

<sup>64</sup> Cuadernos del POT. Op. cit. (p. 40 - 43)





Fig. 98 Tintal Corabastos structuring operation, POT, DAPD, Bogotá 2000.

and wetlands as well as the construction of all the existing drainage canals. The street network to improve accessibility to the area is believed to require further development as well. The development of the street network and Transmilenio, the new public transport system are thought of as a positive influence in the economical and productive activity in the area. The structuring operation has devised five partial plans that establish areas to be developed through low income housing projects, urban renewal plans, public space and urban facilities provision<sup>65</sup> (fig. 98).

Alameda El Porvenir is considered the main public space in the structuring operation and will work as the spine to articulate other public spaces in the area consisting in parks, green areas and drainage canals. Besides, Alameda El Porvenir is also a main public space in the new low income housing projects. Furthermore, Alameda El Porvenir connects Kennedy neighborhood which is the more consolidated district in the area to the informal settlements and the recently built low income housing projects. In general in these areas, new developments are segregated from existing ones because connections between developments are usually inexistent. Therefore, Alameda El Porvenir is a way to establish connections between existing and new developments that otherwise would be difficult to establish.

## 6.2. Alameda El Porvenir first phase:

Alameda El Porvenir as it has been said before, is a 17 km alameda that runs across Bosa, Kennedy, Soacha an Fontibon districts (figs. 99, 100) and has been developed in two phases. The first phase of Alameda El Porvenir has two segments. The first segment which is 2 km long and runs east-west, starts in consolidated Kennedy neighborhood and ends in Ciudad de Cali Av. which is at the moment the last north-south ring artery, a main connection axis in the city. The second segment is 6.60 km long, starting at Tintal Public Library, has mostly a north-south direction and ends in Ciudadela El Recreo, a public low income housing project.

The first segment of Alameda El Porvenir (fig. 101) runs parallel to Kennedy's neighborhood main access thoroughfare, Las Americas Avenue as a wide sidewalk. From Las Americas Av. the alameda runs across existing and projected residential areas.

<sup>65</sup> Cuadernos del POT. Op. cit. (p. 43)





0  
500  
1 Km.  
2 Km.

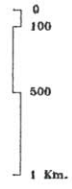
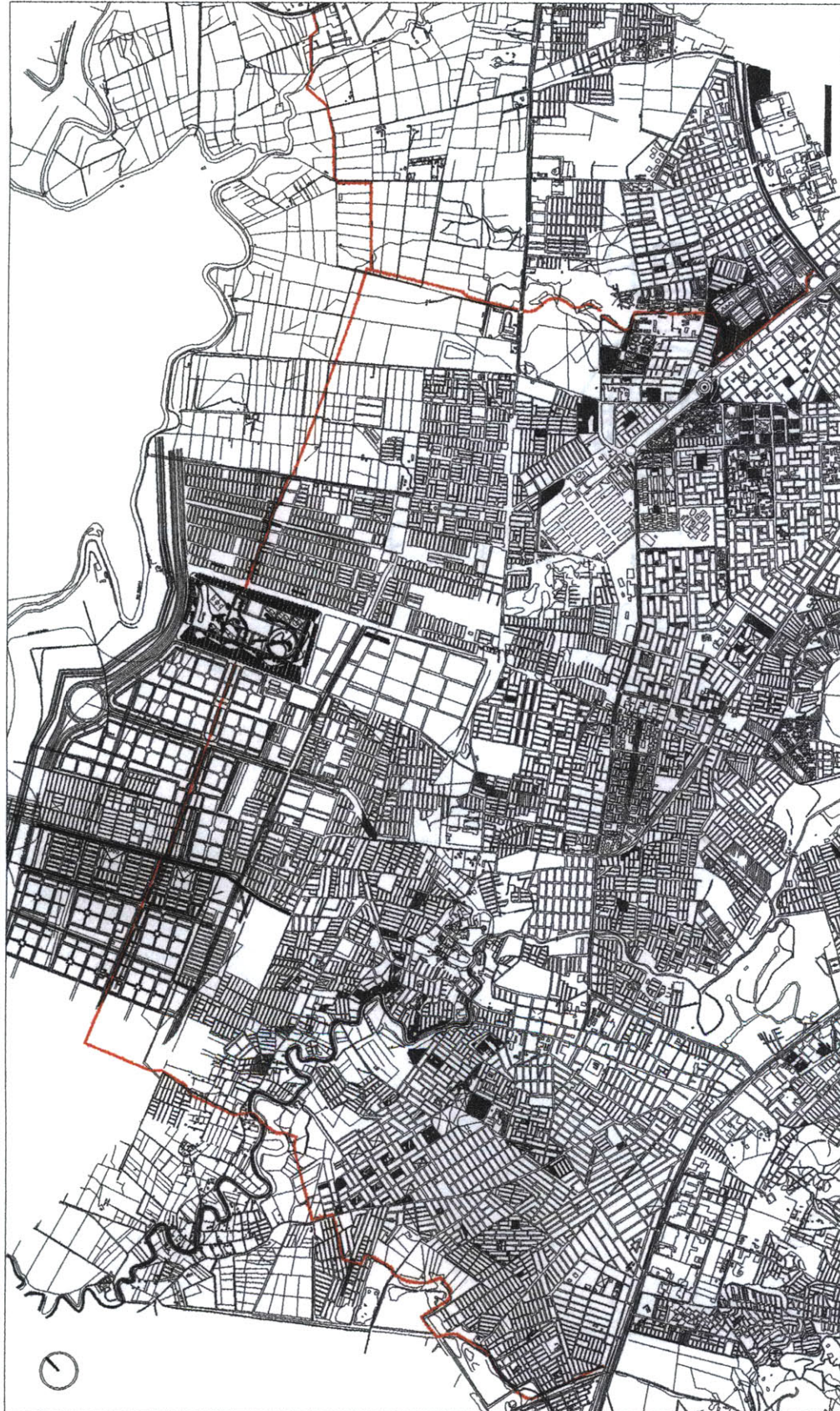
# ALAMEDA PORVENIR

Lenght : 17 Km.  
(10.56 Miles)  
Width : 10 - 14 Mt.  
(32.8 - 45.9 Feet)



Master Plan. Fig. 99





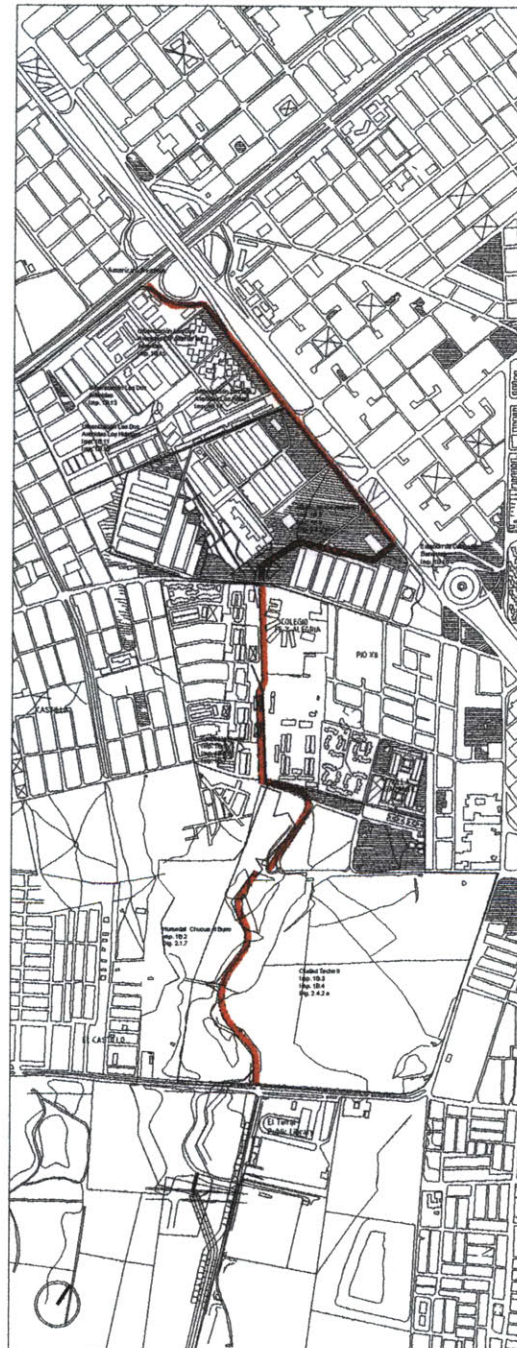
ALAMEDA  
PORVENIR

Lenght : 17 Km.  
(10.56 Miles)  
Width : 10 - 14 Mt.  
(32.8 - 45.9 Feet)



Master Plan. Fig. 100





Segment 1 (Americas Av. - El Tintal Public Library) Fig. 101

ALAMEDA  
PORVENIR  
PHASE 1 (Segment 1)

Lenght : 2 Km.  
(1.24 Miles)

Width : 10 - 14 Mt.  
(32.8 - 45.9 Feet)







Fig. 102 Tintal Public Library, Bogotá, 2001.



In most of the corridor the alameda runs parallel to green areas left by the residential developments and the preservation area of El Burro Canal. Thus the alameda profits from and enhances an otherwise residual space. The rest of the alameda goes along El Burro wetland as a promenade and defines its border. A pedestrian bridge over Ciudad de Cali Av. reaches Tintal Public Library and connects this segment to the rest of the alameda (fig. 102).

In relation to the urban structure, this segment of the alameda is an independent pedestrian and bicycle path along a series of green areas left by existing and projected residential developments. The alameda also defines the border of a natural element, El Burro wetland and will prevent its invasion since it is an area yet to be developed<sup>66</sup>. The alameda's urban design profits from the presence of residual spaces in the urban structure to improve their condition and to transform them in a new public space. The alameda connects public facilities- it is a way to reach Tintal Public Library - one of the main educational and cultural facilities in the area as it has just been mentioned - from Kennedy neighborhood and there is also a school next to the alameda (fig. 103). Furthermore, the alameda works as a connector between the Kennedy consolidated sector and the western areas yet to be developed.

Still, because the area is yet to be developed other actions in the public space system are required. The relation between the alameda and some residual spaces along the corridor is not very clear and needs further work; for instance the canal that reaches El Burro wetland is still in a poor condition. Being one of the elements of the public space structure, the success of the alameda depends on the way the rest of the public space system is developed. The fact that new developments have their green spaces adjacent to the alameda corridor is a good sign in this sense.

The alameda is used as an alternative circulation path, as a shortcut and a safer and better place to walk. Because it is an independent pedestrian and bicycle path, it is used by children to go to school and to Tintal Public Library. Parents use it to pick up their children from school as well. Children gather in the alameda to play and old people use it as a promenade specially along El Burro wetland.

<sup>66</sup> Invasion of wetlands by settlements is a problem in the area. Signs alerting people against buying land on wetlands from illegal developers can be seen in the area.





Figs. 103 - 104 Alameda El Porvenir: Phase 1, segment 1.

It is also used to reach Corabastos the main market in the area and as a recreational path during weekends in connection to the rest of the east-west alameda. The alameda is not completely finished though, in some parts it is interrupted (fig. 104). The wide sidewalk proposed between Las Americas Av. and Boyaca Av. is not yet build. Nevertheless, it is possible to anticipate that this segment will be used to reach public transportation; Las Americas Av. and Boyaca Av. are important public transportation arteries in the area and Las Americas Av. will have soon the new public transportation system Transmilenio.

This segment of the alameda is not very long, therefore it is good for walking. It could also be said that it is almost self contained; although it connects to the rest of the alameda it works well in itself and has its own character.



Figs. 107 - 109 Alameda El Porvenir: phase 1, segment 2.

The second segment of this phase (fig. 105, 106) starting at Tintal Public Library runs east- west through the green area of a future residential development and parallel to Castilla drainage canal towards the north side and in front of five floor apartment buildings on the south side (fig. 107). Half way between the Public Library and the Bogotá River, alameda changes its direction to have a north-south bearing for approximately 5.5 km (fig. 108). In this segment the alameda has at least five parts which have at the same time very different characters. In the first part, the alameda makes use of a public corridor -a sewage system interceptor- that goes through farmlands with eucalyptus trees and pastures that are the characteristic landscape of the area and where future low income housing will be developed at some point. At the end of the corridor a park and one of the drainage canals in the area are at the moment under construction. The alameda is an independent pedestrian and bicycle path in an area still to be developed, thus the alameda is the first element of the future urban structure to appear. Thus, a public space different from a street is the starting point of the settlements to be developed and in this sense it is a new way to approach the construction of the city. (fig. 109).

The second part in this segment has a completely different character. The alameda runs across middle of a very dense residential area which has an informal origin. The settlement is in various stages of consolidation; streets are not paved and the absence of public space provision and urban facilities was recently compensated through the construction of a park and two school

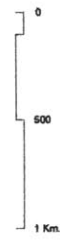




Alameda Corridor



Segment 2 (El Tintal Public Library - Alameda Franja Seca) Fig.105

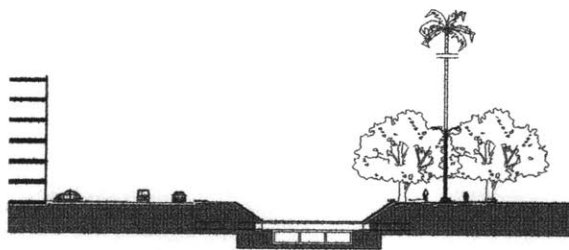


ALAMEDA  
PORVENIR  
PHASE 1 (Segment 2)

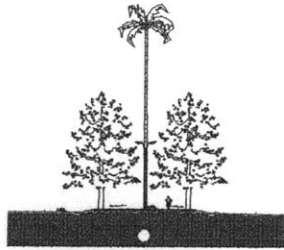
Lenght : 5.5 Km.  
(3.41 Miles)  
Width : 10 - 14 Mt.  
(32.8 - 45.9 Feet)







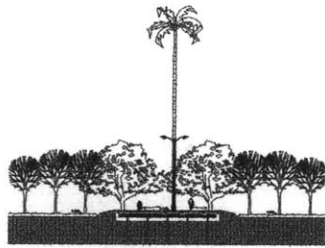
DESDE BIBLIOTECA TINTAL HASTA INTERCEPTOR CAMARCA



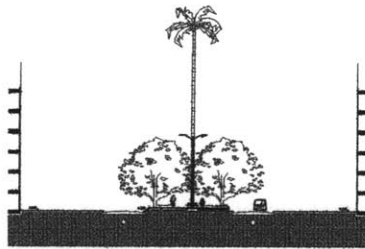
DESDE INTERCEPTOR CAMARCA HASTA CDC BELLAVISTA



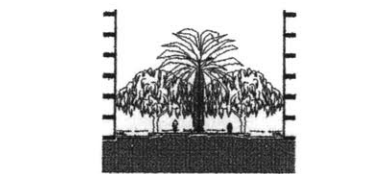
ENTRE BARRIOS BELLAVISTA LOS ALMENDROS LA RIVERA



TRAMO 4- SOBRE GIBRALTAR PT1A4



DESDE RELLENO GIBRALTAR HASTA URBANIZACION SANTIAGO DE LAS ATALAYAS



DESDE RELLENO GIBRALTAR HASTA URBANIZACION SANTIAGO DE LAS ATALAYAS

Typical Sections



Segment 2 (El Tintal Public Library - Alameda Franja Seca) Fig.106



Figs. 110 - 114 Alameda El Porvenir: phase 1, segment 2.

facilities (figs. 110, 111). Alameda El Porvenir runs in front of the small neighborhood park and Bellavista school and nursery, and will connect to Alameda 40 Sur which has been already been described (chapter 5.3.) on the other side of the park. Thus, the alameda which in some places is less than 15m wide runs parallel to some of the local streets and could be thought of as a long plaza. Immediately after the residential area just mentioned, the third part of this segment runs through the middle of future Gibraltar Park (fig. 112). As it has been mentioned already Gibraltar was a dump area now under treatment to allow the construction of the park. Fumes and strong smells are still felt in the area though. The fourth part of the alameda runs across an area where, Ciudadela El Porvenir a low income housing project which is being developed by Metrovivienda is to be developed and has a similar character to the first part just described; the already built alameda is the first urban element in the area (fig. 113). Alameda El Porvenir meets Alameda Bosa (fig. 114) along Canal Tintal III that runs in the middle of an informal settlement and a new private low income housing project. Here again, although it is still under construction the alameda meets a dense area. The Alameda runs next to a projected avenue in the area and it is not very clear if the alameda is independent of the avenue or runs in between the future avenue (fig. 115).

Although it was included as a second phase, the last part of this segment starts at Alameda Bosa and runs through the middle of two low income housing projects. One is a private development that is already built and the other one is Ciudadela El Recreo -the first Metrovivienda project in the area, still under construction. In Ciudadela El Recreo the public space structure is by far better than the houses. In these residential developments the alameda goes along the middle of the main north south street of both developments as a rambla. While the adjacent streets in the private development are not paved yet, in Ciudadela El Recreo the street network and the public space infrastructure is completed. Thus in the latter, the Alameda connects to the main green public space that runs in the middle of the residential development. In this part Alameda El Porvenir works as a well planned and designed promenade related to the public space structure (figs. 116, 117, 118, 119, 120).

In relation to the way in which the alameda corridor was defined, it is possible to say that in general, in this segment Alameda El Porvenir goes across land that is owned by the city. That includes





Figs. 115 - 120 Alameda El Porvenir: phase 1, segment 2.

a sewerage interceptor<sup>67</sup>, when the alameda changes to a north south direction, public space provision in new housing developments. The area where the park and the school were built was bought by the city; furthermore, green areas of future developments were received by the city in advance. Thus, the alameda was built and at the same time it is guaranteed that it will run next to public green areas or parks. This procedure anticipates that the relation between future developments and the alameda is a good one. This is very important because in other alamedas it is possible to verify that although the alameda is a very good public space it is not always easy to establish a good relationship between the existing developments and the new public space. This is true for instance in the case of Alameda Torca as it has been explained in chapter 5.1. However, land acquisition has prevented the alameda completion as it will be explained further on.

Regarding the role this segment has in the urban structure of the area, it can be said that Alameda El Porvenir serves many purposes. Being a north-south axis the alameda connects to the canal's public space system yet to be implemented, and to the other alamedas in the area. In this way, Alameda El Porvenir is part of a more ambitious and necessary public space network. Moreover, Alameda El Porvenir connects and relates consolidated areas, informal settlements as well as new developments; It is also a way to build a system of linked urban facilities. Furthermore, since there is almost no public space available when the alameda runs through settlements of an informal origin, the alameda could be thought of as a long plaza; it could be argued that it works as a new kind of civic space. Although continuity of the alameda is necessary to connect the area and in a plan may seem that it is too long, it is also true that each one of the parts that have been described works very well within its own limits. Thus the alameda is a linear structure in which it is possible to have distinct and different spaces.

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<sup>67</sup> Cundinamarca sewerage interceptor was a main infrastructure public work in the area and its corridor belongs to the city now. The City Water and Sewerage Company (EAAB) allowed the development of the alameda on top of the system. Tree planting was studied and permitted.



Concerning the way in which the alameda is used, Alameda El Porvenir is a circulation path and a recreational space. As a circulation path it is used in the same way as the other segment; children and parents profit from the alameda to go to school and to Tintal Public Library which is becoming the most important educational urban facility in the area. Before it was finished it was possible to see parents and children riding bicycles to go and to come from schools. People use it also to go to their work places; it has been reported that in the morning and at the end of the day bicycle riding for work purposes is an increasing activity. It is used to reach Kennedy district, a very populated area with employment opportunities and urban services. For recreational activities it is used by children after school areas and heavily used on Sundays for walking and cycling specially during the morning. On a recent Sunday it could be asserted that this whole segment was crowded all along the corridor. Although certain parts along the corridor are believed to be very dangerous, when the alameda is being used it is a safe place for everybody. There is also an increasing interest for the alameda; it is possible to find people visiting and exploring the new space from other parts of the city or nearby areas. It is also important to mention that the alameda is cared for next to residential areas. In some of the areas yet to be developed light fixtures have been vandalized and robbed. No street furniture has been installed along the alameda except in Ciudadela El Recreo. The need for urban furniture is felt since walking distances are long; Nonetheless, urban furniture requires permanent use of the alameda and care from the people living next to it.

### **6.3. Alameda El Porvenir second phase:**

The second phase of Alameda El Porvenir has two very different segments. One reaches Fontibon district; the other starts at South Highway and runs through low income housing projects and informal settlements and will reach Ciudadela El Recreo and therefore will complete the whole corridor.

The first segment (fig. 121) starts at the end of the east-west segment that has just been described. It is built and goes through farmlands to Centenario Av. which is the west border of Fontibon a very dense and prosperous district in the area. The alameda allows a connection between the informal settlement areas and Fontibon, a consolidated area which has also employment opportunities and an important industrial activity. This connection was thought of as necessary and convenient in the plan described



Fig. 122 - 126 Alameda El Porvenir: phase 2, segment 1.

at the beginning of the chapter<sup>68</sup>. The alameda's corridor area is yet to be developed in general terms; for the time being the place is mostly farmlands and has that particular landscape character of pastures and eucalyptus trees that has been mentioned already (figs. 122, 123, 124, 125). The alameda seems at the moment a strange path in the middle of nowhere and therefore has a completely different character. After Centenario Av. the alameda connects to Fontibon recently built bicycle network (fig. 126) that connects to rest of the city. Not all the alameda is built. Difficulties in land acquisition to be solved have prevented the construction of a part of the alameda<sup>69</sup>.

This segment of Alameda El Porvenir is used by children from Fontibon to go Tintal Public Library and by the people that live in the less consolidated area to reach work places in the Fontibon area. It is also used during weekends and holidays as a recreational path; because it is still a rural area, the people living next to the Bogotá River can still take advantage of the actual landscape and natural sceneries of the place. The alameda opened an area that used to be closed for public circulation, thus the people still feel suspicious of the new path. It is mostly used for bicycle circulation since it is a long way to walk from the populated areas in both ends of the alameda but it is sometimes used as a pedestrian way though. The alameda is still under construction and no urban furniture, not even streets lights have been installed which means that the alameda can only be used during the day for the time being. The place where this branch meets the rest of the alameda has become a meeting point since the space is a plaza. People meet and the need for urban furniture which has not been installed yet is felt. On weekends street vendors sell drinks and snacks to the users at this point, an activity that needs to be regulated because of the problems related to public space invasion.

The other segment (fig. 127) starts at South Highway outside Bogotá in Soacha municipality. An agreement between Bogotá

<sup>68</sup> Mario A. Noriega T. Bogotá west expansion strategy Op. cit. Revista Javeriana, May 1992.

<sup>69</sup> Juan Camilo Macias y Jorge Pinzon, follow up report to Bogotá city council member, Juan Carlos regarding Alameda El Porvenir 's maintenance by the actual administration.







and Soacha allowed the construction of the alameda. Nonetheless, in some of areas along the corridor, the fact that two different administrations are in charge of the development of the alameda has made its construction more difficult. It is the corridor which has more interruptions and while it is supposed to connect to the rest of the alameda more than three km have not yet started to be build. In general the corridor goes through informal settlements which are in a less consolidated stage that the ones described just before. Settlements in the area are very different; new low income housing projects coexist with slum areas next to wetlands and drainage canals. In general the area has developed through the addition of informal settlements in various stages of consolidation, no public space provision has been made and streets are not paved. During the rainy season people and public transportation circulate in very bad conditions of flooding and mud. From South Highway the alameda runs along a future main street (figs. 128, 129) and after some meters runs in between a recently build low income housing project (fig. 130) and then Alameda El Porvenir runs across and area to be developed and the poorest settlements of the corridor (fig. 131). Passing these settlements, the alameda is the border of a wetland (figs. 132, 133) which is in a very bad state of preservation. In the future the alameda will be in the middle of Tibanica Park. When arriving to a neighborhood the alameda goes in between a very narrow street (fig. 134). The next part which is not yet connected to the one previously described, runs in front of a recently built school and nursery next to the space left to build a park and then is interrupted (figs. 135, 136).

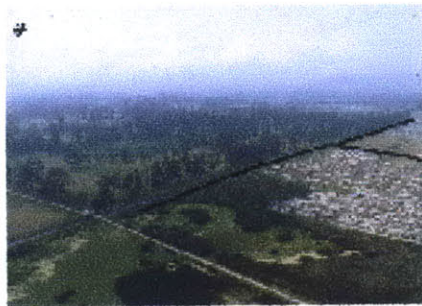
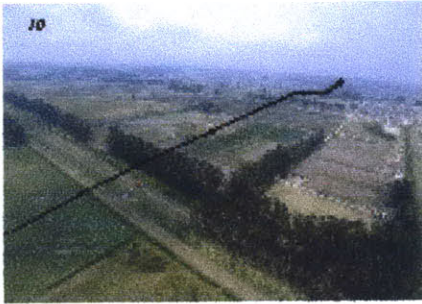


Figs. 128 - 131 Alameda El Porvenir: phase 2, segment 2.

Alameda El Porvenir and the projected parks -which have not been built but the land is already reserved for this purpose- together with the recently built educational facility is a completely new public space structure in the area. The latter has been superimposed to a problematic existing urban structure thus it is evident that a different approach to consolidate and complete the urban structure of the area has been proposed. This new approach consists in the construction of a public space that connects parks and urban facilities previous to other required actions in the belief that the quality of life of the people living in the sout area will be improved.

Although the alameda is still under construction and interrupted in several points (fig. 137), it has been started to be used as a circulation path in the same way it has been already described in





Alameda Corridor



0  
500  
1 Km.

ALAMEDA  
PORVENIR  
PHASE 2 (Segment 2)

Lenght : 7.16 Km.  
(4.44 Miles)  
Width : 10 - 14 Mt.  
(32.8 - 45.9 Feet)







Figs. 132 - 136 Alameda El Porvenir: phase 2, segment 2.



the other parts. It is used to go to school and to work places because it connects to South Highway. Nevertheless a particular emphasis in its use for recreational activities during weekends was expressed by the people living next to the alameda. In this area the people have started to feel that taking care of the alameda is their concern in the first place.



Fig. 137 Alameda El Porvenir: phase 2, segment 2.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

From what has been accounted for it would be necessary to conclude in two different levels: in the first place conclusions on Alameda El Porvenir include the role Alameda El Porvenir plays in the urban structure of the south west area and the way in which the alameda corridor is starting to be profited from. Moreover, in relation to La red de Alamedas as a public space project, conclusions can be drawn on the nature of the proposals.

### 7.1. Alameda El Porvenir:

As it has been said before, Alameda El Porvenir is the most ambitious of all the proposed alamedas. In relation to the urban structure, the alameda works as the spine of a system of other public space projects, new urban facilities and future developments that include low income housing projects.

*Alameda El Porvenir is a new public space which connects and relates other interventions to build a complete city fragment:*

According to the Director of the Public Space Office (TEP) in the City Planning Department (DAPD) <sup>70</sup>, Alameda El Porvenir was first proposed as a greenway along Bogotá River and was later moved to the center of the least consolidated informal settlements

<sup>70</sup> Architect Lorenzo Castro was director of Public Space Office at DAPD during the 98-01 city administration and is at present consultant on public space issues for DAPD.

in the south area in the belief that it could be used to improve the area's urban structure and be a significant change in the quality of life of the people. Alameda El Porvenir as a public space intervention relates to other projects in the area as it has been demonstrated, to build a new urban structure in which what already exists and the future interventions will contribute to the development of a complete city fragment. From what has been described in relation to the alameda corridor, it is evident that the alameda connects recently built urban facilities as Bellavista educational complex and Tintal Library as well as existing and projected parks but it is also true that it improves and allows connections with existing urban facilities such as schools, commercial areas and employment centers in the area. Moreover, Alameda El Porvenir will work as the articulator of other linear public spaces that have been proposed along the drainage canal system; Alameda Bosa is already built and Alameda 40 has been proposed. There are other alamedas to be developed in the area though. The alameda's north-south direction allows connections between existing and planned developments. In general expansion areas are the result of the addition of unrelated neighborhoods. Therefore connections between neighborhoods are a constant problem in expansion areas. Alameda El Porvenir is one of the public space projects in a new urban structure that is going to be superimposed on the one existing in the south area.

*Alameda El Porvenir is a public space project in which various scales are addressed and cared for:*

Alameda El Porvenir final layout was the result of knowledge gathered on the field in relation to the particular conditions of the area concerning public land availability as well as land acquisition. At the same time, the urban structure of the existing settlements as well as the projects that had been proposed and developed in the area were also taken into consideration to establish the corridor. Moreover, it has been demonstrated that although at the beginning a 17 km alameda may seem too long, each segment has its own particular character and plays a particular role in the immediate surroundings. Besides, the intervention allows connections between far away areas that are easier to reach because of the alameda – the connection between Fontibon and Soacha for instance -. It has been demonstrated that the alameda incorporates and makes use of remnant spaces left in the urbanization process that could not be profited from otherwise. Moreover, the alameda



help to define the borders of natural elements such as wetlands and allows public use of these places. Alameda El Porvenir can be seen as an example of public space projects dealing with a scale of intervention concerned with the particular conditions of a place that are difficult to address in general plans.

*Alameda El Porvenir can be seen as an example of a new approach to consolidate periphery areas:*

One thing that strikes when visiting the alameda is that although it is still under construction the already built sections propose a new approach to the way periphery areas can be developed. Alameda El Porvenir is already built in areas yet to be urbanized. Thus it is a change in the consolidation process of periphery areas. In the latter the construction of houses precedes any public space provision and connections to the rest of the city are done through one artery within the street network. In this case, Alameda El Porvenir is a built and defined public space that comes first and although the alameda is not at the moment a safe place in the areas where there are still no developments it is there to be used and profited from and future developments will necessarily have to take the alameda into account. Moreover, Alameda El Porvenir allows different connections to the rest of the city.

Alameda El Porvenir it is an example of the construction of the city from the public space. Furthermore, the alameda project is consistent with one of the objectives of the new plan concerning the role of public agents in the construction of the city which considers public space as a field of public interventions, a practice that had been lost in previous general plans as it has been demonstrated.

*Alameda El Porvenir is a new type of public space in which a variety of activities can take place:*

In relation to the way in which the alameda has started to be used it is possible to conclude that:

In his book "Life between buildings", Jan Gehl divides outdoor activities in public space in three categories which at the same time places very different demands on the physical environment: necessary activities, optional activities and social activities<sup>71</sup>. It is

possible to argue that alameda is a public space in which all these categories of activities take place. Necessary activities include going to school and work places for example. It has been observed that people in the south west area use the alameda for these necessary activities now and its use is increasing. Moreover, a video prepared by a city counselor who is following Alameda El Porvenir development, shows that early in the morning, at midday and early in the evening the built sections of the alameda are used for these purposes.

Alameda El Porvenir is used as a short cut since connections to the rest of the city are longer through the street network. It has also been reported that alameda saves money since using a bicycle is cheaper than taking public transportation. Alameda El Porvenir is also used to reach public transportation. The new public transportation system, Transmilenio, which is quicker and better than the existing bus system will be easily reached through Alameda El Porvenir. For children it is also safer to go to school walking along the alameda early in the morning and at midday. On Sundays and holidays, men and women use it to go to Corabastos the main wholesale market in the area.

Alameda El Porvenir is also used for optional activities as well as social activities. As it has been said, children use the alameda to go to Tintal Public Library and to the new parks. At the same time children play in the alameda after school hours and it is possible to see old people using the alameda as a promenade specially along the wetlands since these places offer an attractive natural landscape although they need further treatment to enhance their recreational potential. Moreover, Alameda El Porvenir has become a recreational public space; on Sundays and holidays a considerable amount of people use the alameda to ride bicycles and walk for pleasure. Street vendors sell sodas and snacks in places where concentration of people is permanent such as the plazas along the alameda and the area where Alameda El Porvenir meets Alameda Bosa. Nevertheless benches have only been installed in Ciudadela El Recreo. Since it is a new space it is possible to see people from the south west area as well as from other parts of the city walking along the alameda because they are curious of the alameda. Furthermore, people see the alameda

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<sup>71</sup> Jan Gehl, *Life between buildings, using public space*, Arkitektens Forlag, Third Edition, Copenhagen, 1996 (p11)



not only as a promenade but as a public space that entails the similar representative qualities of traditional plazas; El Porvenir was specifically referred to as a long plaza when asking people living next to the alameda in one of poorest areas along the second phase : “we are very happy with the alameda during weekends, it is like having a plaza”, was the opinion of one of the residents in a recent visit to the alameda.

*There are still problems in the development of Alameda El Porvenir:*

Still, there are problems that need attention. It has been reported that the alameda is not a safe place when it goes along areas still to be developed and some people have said that it is even a perfect place to make robberies<sup>72</sup>. Furthermore, it is also possible to see that light fixtures as well as sewerage lids have been taken away in the same areas. Some places like future Gibraltar Park -which used to be a dump area - is still one of the most dangerous areas of the corridor<sup>73</sup>; and when visiting the alameda it was also perceived as such. There are also other places as the one in front of the slums in the second phase that are also felt as not very safe although the alameda is being used. The alameda has not been completed because there are still problems with land acquisition. These interruptions make very difficult to profit from the alameda specially in the second phase. It has also been denounced that the current city administration has been negligent in relation to the necessary management procedures to conclude the project. This is not a good sign in the development of the rest of the projects since alamedas require that administrations take actions to develop alamedas. Besides, it has also been pointed out that some parts in the second phase have changed the general specifications of alamedas; part of the alameda was built along a narrow street and as a result the alameda has no longer the appropriate section. This means that site supervision has failed and needs more attention from the administration. Moreover, in the second phase the construction of related projects such as the park next to the

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<sup>72</sup> City Counselor J.C. Florez reports on the development of Alameda El Porvenir. Mr. J.C. Florez is the coordinator of Alameda El Porvenir commission. It was also reported in a newspaper article “Protección a El Porvenir”, El Tiempo, February 24th 2002.

<sup>73</sup> City Counselor J.C. Florez reports on the development of Alameda El Porvenir.

new educational facility have not yet started. Another problem, that has been mentioned is the need for an educational campaign concerning the use and protection of the alameda from abusive behavior. Motorbike circulation is forbidden on the alameda; nevertheless, police as well as other people have started to circulate in motorbikes along the alameda. Tree planting is also perceived as a problem. Some of the species are not appropriate for this kind of public space and replacement of damaged trees is very slow<sup>74</sup>.

The good news is that there is people in the city administration interested in the development of alamedas. At the same time it has been reported that people from the 30 neighborhoods near the alameda which represent almost a million citizens from the poorest areas in the city are using it<sup>75</sup>. These are quite interesting figures for a project that has not been finished and has the problems that have been mentioned already. Therefore, regarding the way in which Alameda El Porvenir is being used, a possible scenario once the alameda is finished could meet a description of a good public space: "the presence of other people, activities, events and inspiration and stimulation comprise one of the most important qualities of public spaces all together"<sup>76</sup>.

## **7.2. La Red de Alamedas, as a public space project:**

Alamedas were proposed as public space projects and in that sense owe their development to a specific scale of intervention in the city, that of the urban design which addresses particular problems in the city. Public space projects as it has been said have been proposed independently from general plans or included in a series of other projects, actions and programs. Nevertheless, in the case of La Red de Alamedas a particular moment in the development of the city allowed that alamedas though public space projects would be included in some of the structuring operations proposed in the general plan, the POT<sup>77</sup>, and thus be part of more complex urban processes. In that sense it has been demonstrated

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid and confirmed in a video prepared by City counselor J.C. Florez.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Jan Gehl, Op. cit.(p15)



that integrated actions and projects make possible the development of complete fragments of the city.

Alamedas deal with a particular scale in which the quality of the collective space that is being produced in the city is cared for and in this sense the projects need fine-tuning. In consolidated areas the relation between the existing and planned developments needs further study since it is possible to see that when alamedas use remnant spaces developments have not considered that these spaces could be profited from. In general, buildings and houses as well as the urban structure were designed to avoid any relation to these spaces therefore improvement of these conditions is necessary. Since alamedas have been proposed in areas yet to be developed these problems can be anticipated and new developments can take advantage from the presence of alamedas.

Regarding the areas where alamedas have been proposed it is clear that alamedas in the center of the city play a different role than alamedas in expansion areas and therefore their potential varies according to their location. Alamedas in expansion areas, have two purposes. On one hand, alamedas specially in the west expansion area and because the area lacks a proper public space system are a main public space that articulates other public spaces. On the other hand, in areas yet to be developed alamedas will help in the consolidation and definition of the future urban structure. Alamedas will contribute to the city expansion areas' urban planning and urban design from the public space structure. This is a change in the traditional way these areas have been developed. That is through main street extensions and without almost any public space provision. When analyzing the different alameda's corridors it is evident that in most cases and because of the particular moment in which they were proposed, alamedas have been an instrument to rethink the urban structure in certain areas.

In relation to the development of an ecological structure in the city, because of their linear condition, alamedas can be considered an appropriate intervention to allow public use along the many

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<sup>77</sup> The fact that alamedas were proposed simultaneously with the POT development explain much of the alamedas' potential to structure the expansion areas. At the moment a considerable revision of the way in which the city had been developed was done.

canals in the city and along the borders of natural elements such as rivers and wetlands. Alamedas also connect the ecological structure of the city, the natural elements as well as the park system. Furthermore, most alamedas proposed along canals are a joint public work between city institutions which results in a good and efficient public investment in the improvement of quality of public space and consequently of life in the city.

Alamedas define borders and limits to urban developments and natural conditions, Alameda 189<sup>th</sup> Canal improves the quality of the canal's public space but at the same time provides a public space border to El Verbenal neighborhood including part of the neighborhood's street system in the alameda pavement treatment. Alamedas also define both built and open space urban facility's borders as Alamedas Guaymaral and Arrayanes do to the cemeteries and Alameda Jaboque and Porvenir do to existing or projected green spaces in along the corridor. Alamedas Cuarenta Sur and Porvenir will define El Burro and La Vaca wetlands's border and at the same time will prevent wetland's invasion with informal low income housing as its has occurred for the past years. The whole operation will also help the legalization process of these settlements. Alameda Rio Bogotá will make more difficult for invasion and informal settlements to occur in the river's bank.

Concerning the quality of the public space that is being produced in the city in recent times it is also true that alamedas are another example of a changing attitude. For many years, in Bogotá, infrastructure projects such as bridges, canals and streets were designed by engineers from a technical and functional point of view without considering the quality of the public space involved. However, all the alamedas have been designed by architects and urban designers. Architects were in every case team directors in multidisciplinary groups. In this way, a traditional engineering field is recovered for urban design and architecture. This may seem obvious in other places but it is a recent practice in Colombia. Infrastructure projects such as main thoroughfares, complex street junctions, canals and bridges have now a public space component thus architects, urban designers, engineers and landscape architects have to work together.

The proposed alamedas are very different because of their location in the city, the particular corridors and their relation to the urban structure. Alamedas can work as an independent network or



along streets as it has been shown.

Some alamedas in the north expansion of the city and some segments of Alamedas El Porvenir and Usme constitute independent pedestrian and bicycle paths. As an independent network alamedas are an alternative circulation path to connect urban facilities, parks and natural elements and as a way to reach public transportation. Alamedas allow the use of bicycles as a transportation means which makes sense in periphery areas. In general people living in these areas do not have cars. Bicycles can be used to go to work and children can ride them to schools as well. Besides, the weather in Bogotá allows bicycle riding most of the year. As an independent network, alamedas are safer for children and for old people because they are a continuous space with few streets crossings. Moreover, alamedas may work as environmental and recreational paths much in the same way greenways do although these alamedas are more modest than most greenways.

Along streets, alamedas like San Simon, Jaboque and 40 Sur, just to mention some of them, take advantage of non built planned avenues or streets and modify the street section to include an alameda either as a wide sidewalk or as a "rambla". Thus alamedas help to improve the quality of the street public space and at the same time subvert the way in which the street network has been developed.

The alamedas reviewed in this document are the beginning of a greater network yet to be developed. Furthermore, as it has been said in the introduction, alamedas of different kinds have been proposed and built in the city already. Some of the new alamedas have already been included in structuring operations and the TEP is developing alamedas in the central city at the moment. There is still many aspects of alamedas that need further study: is it possible to have alamedas throughout the city? Is it necessary? What can we learn from Alameda El Porvenir? Should the city start to reserve land for all the alamedas before it becomes too expensive to do? What happens to land prices in areas yet to be developed when the alameda is built in the first place. Should urban regulations in the areas next to alamedas be thoroughly revised in order to make the best of the new public space? Should a broader educational campaign be developed in order to prevent alamedas abandonment and to make sure alamedas will be cared for by the people living next? Will alamedas survive city administrations

not particularly concerned with alamedas?

Alamedas produce a great impact in the city. In this sense Penalosa's strong political will left a major physical structure that will affect the form of the city and also the way in which the city is perceived and used. As a strategy it has anticipatory conditions which might be good to a certain extent but might also have problems. In general, it is possible to say that alamedas contribute to the development of a new city model in which public space plays an important role since it is planned and developed before the construction of public and private interventions; alamedas anticipate the urban structure of the new developments and at the same time are a superimposed space on the existing one. This is new in the city. Alamedas as an independent network need to be built in most cases before the area is fully developed. Nevertheless, in some cases land could be reserved and alamedas could be built at the same time as the new developments because in certain places it might be difficult to protect the alameda from vandalism as it has been seen in Alameda El Porvenir. It is also true that alamedas work if they are related to a broader public space system consisting of parks, natural elements and urban facilities.

In the new city model, the construction of the collective in the city prevails over private interventions. A good quality public space replaces the street network which was the way in which extensions of the city were performed. Moreover, this new public space allows necessary as well as optional activities. Pedestrian as well as bicycle circulation transform the way in which the city is used and enjoyed. It allows social contact as well as a cleaner environment. It has been reported that in the city walking and bicycle riding for transportation has increased <sup>78</sup> which allows to conclude that alamedas are not only a new public space that has started to be used for different kinds of leisure activities but at the same time alamedas contribute to a new way to build the city in which pedestrian and bicycle circulation is privileged over automobile traffic. If that is true then the relation between

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<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, while in 1998 7% of the population of Bogotá walked for transportation in 2001 the figures reached 14%. At the same time bicycle riding as a transportation system increased from 0.5 to 3%. Ibid.



alamedas and public transportation must be considered as an important issue. Places where people leave their bicycles in order to take public transportation are necessary and need to be provided. Places where people leave their bicycles in order to take public transportation are necessary and need to be provided. As it has been said, alamedas connect to ciclorutas network as well and ciclorutas are being developed at the moment.

Finally, alamedas are new in Bogota and it might not be any other example of such a project in the world. However, it is still too soon to evaluate alamedas both as a public space in itself and as a strategy to improve and develop certain areas in the city.

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- Fig. 99 Alameda El Porvenir Urban Design Project. Architect Felipe González Pacheco.
- Fig. 100 Marcela Angel.
- Fig. 101 Marcela Angel.
- Fig. 102 Photo Marcela Angel.
- Fig. 103 Photo Marcela Angel.
- Fig. 104 Photo Marcela Angel.
- Fig. 105 Marcela Angel.
- Fig. 106 Alameda El Porvenir Urban Design Project. Architects Felipe González Pacheco and Ignacio Muñoz.
- Fig. 107 Photo Marcela Angel.
- Fig. 108 Photo Marcela Angel.
- Fig. 109 Photo Marcela Angel.
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- Fig. 137 Photo Marcela Angel.